



NAVY SEAL



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SEPTEMBER 1990

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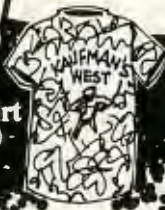
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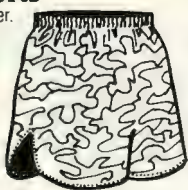


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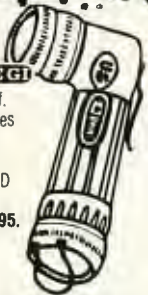
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COVER

When bullets fly uncommon valor often becomes commonplace and Operation Just Cause proved no exception. Though most deeds of heroism will remain unrecognized, soldiers from the units spearheading the attack in Panama were awarded two Silver Stars and six Bronze Stars with V device. Photo: Black Star/Christopher Morris
INSET: *Navy Seal* the movie was written by a former SEAL and promises to be a reasonably accurate look at naval special operations in the Middle East. This still from the film shows Rick Rossavich aiming a Stinger missile at a soon-to-be-destroyed enemy aircraft. Photo: Orion/Bob Marshak



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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

The anti-gun liberal media have taken small notice of it, but the U.S. Supreme Court has been shooting holes in the favored arguments of the gun control movement.

Those who would eviscerate the Second Amendment argue that the amendment's opening clause, "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State," is a reference to a collective right to bear arms, and thus "the right of the people to keep and bear arms" referred to in the amendment's second clause is a right of the American people as a group rather than of Americans as individuals. Moreover, they argue, the "militia" referred to in the Second Amendment is really the National Guard, and what the amendment really means is that the Guard is the custodian of the right to keep and bear arms.

History, common sense, and the plain meaning of English words notwithstanding, the liberal press has done all it could to promulgate this preposterous constitutional revisionism. However, the Supreme Court has now rejected two key elements of it.

In late February, the Court specifically held that the words "the people" used in the Second Amendment meant exactly the same thing as the words "the people" in the First, Fourth, Ninth, and Tenth amendments and the Constitution's preamble. This is significant, because the court has always held that the phrase "the people" in its First, Fourth, and Ninth amendment contexts referred to the rights of Americans as individuals. And that contradicts the view of gun control advocates that the right of "the people" to keep and bear arms is a right held by the collective body of the American people but not enjoyed by individual citizens.

In June, the Court ruled that the National Guard has a dual character, and that in its federal role it comes under the clause of the Constitution that allows Congress to raise and support armies (Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 12) rather than the clause of the Constitution that allows it to organize, arm, and discipline the militia (Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 16). By determining that the Guard in federal service comes under the "armies" clause rather than the "militia" clause, the court said in effect that the Guard is not the same thing as the militia referred to in the Second Amendment, and by extension not the manifestation "the people" referred to in the Second Amendment.

(The latter decision is particularly gratifying, because it came in the case of *Perpich vs U.S. Department of Defense*, in which the Court told several liberal governors, including rabidly anti-gun Michael Dukakis, that they lacked the authority to prevent units of their states' National Guards units from being sent by the Federal government to train in Honduras.)

To be sure, neither of the Court's rulings directly involved a Second Amendment issue, and it is a long leap from them to a decision overturning the semi-auto bans passed by California, New Jersey, and a clutch of American cities in the wake of last year's anti-gun frenzy. Still, a major reason those bans passed at all was that gun control advocates were able to convince lawmakers that the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms was a collective right manifested in the National Guard.

The Supreme Court, it would appear, will not be easily persuaded of that. ☞

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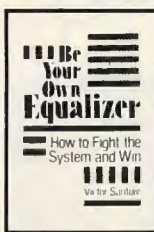
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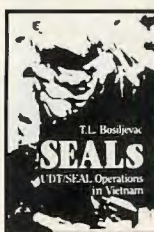
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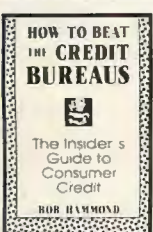
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IN REVIEW



ABOUT a year ago former Special Forces men were excited when Steve Sherman (former S-5 of "B" Company, 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) in Pleiku) announced that he proposed to reprint all the **GREEN BERET** Magazines published during the five years of its existence in five volumes.

Most of those who served in Special Forces in Vietnam have fond memories of the **Green Beret** — especially me, since I was its publisher for five issues. Steve elected to start with Volume 5, since the Group was at its largest during this period and, at least theoretically, the market for it should be the largest. It seems to me that the magazine was also at its most professional during this period. This is a slick, good looking publication, and the production values are as high, or higher, than the original.

I can't imagine a former Green Beret not wanting to own the entire set. I haven't read all of them yet, and probably won't for many months. They're not that kind of read. But for a couple of hours a week I find myself thumbing through them, reading an article that strikes my fancy here, another there. There are pieces on various *camps* and Mike Forces, on old sarges who spent their spare time working in orphanages, on the significance of Tet, and on the tribal customs of the Montagnards and how those beliefs affected, say, the defense of Bu

Prang.

In that case the team had to find a white water buffalo and sacrifice it because some Cambodian soldiers had killed and eaten the snake that was the current incarnation of the spirit of the mountain their camp was on. The spirit was plenty pissed, both because of the indignity and the inconvenience, and a white water buffalo was the only thing that would buy it off.

And on and on; the bloody things are a treasure trove, a gold mine. I suspect the market goes far beyond ex-Green Beans. Militaria and military history buffs, and fans of elite military units will also find their **Green Beret** a never-ending source of wonder and delight. Some of it is pedestrian but it's all interesting. Some of the photos are stunners. Civilian journalists were interested in defeatist themes, and it's great to see these photos of GIs at their best — under fire, coming in from a rough patrol, working in the ville; Martha Raye going from camp to camp entertaining, but also scrounging medical supplies and working as a nurse in dispensaries.

You also get the usual grips and grins, and change-of-command ceremonies. The magazine was created to accentuate the positive; it was, after all, a PIO publication. But when was there ever such a PIO publication?

For me the most touching thing in Volume 5 was a partial list of KIA from B-55, the Nha Trang Mike Force. The list is alphabetical, and contains the names of Americans, Vietnamese and Montagnards, all of whom fought and died in the same unit. One of the names was that of Joe Zamara, whom I had met in a firefight downtown in Nha Trang on the first day of Tet '68. He was dead two hours later, and it was the day before he was to go home on extension leave.

We all have memories like that, and they're in these books. The first volume will have an index of the entire series, cross-indexed by camp, unit, and individual name.

Available at \$27 a volume, or \$125 for all five, from Chapter XXXIX, Special Forces Association, Dept. SOF, 2314 Cheshire Lane, Houston, TX 77018-4023 — *Reviewer Jim Morris served with Special Forces for seven years, spent 22 months in Vietnam and attained the rank of major.*

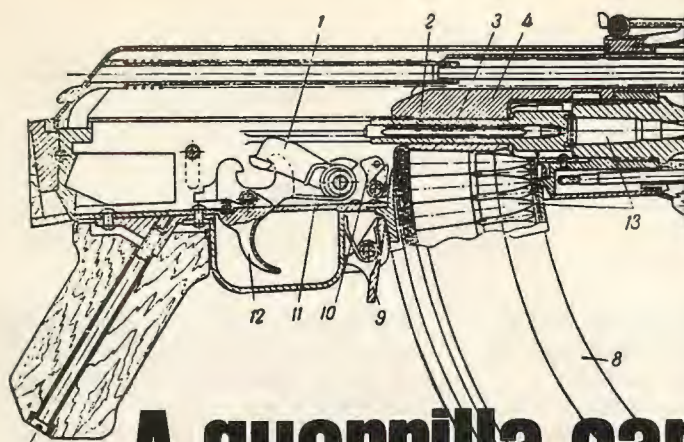
SLOW BURN (by Orrin DeForest, Simon & Schuster, 1990) is a detailed account of one of the more successful intelligence-gathering operations of the Vietnam War. DeForest set up an operation to screen, interrogate, and occasionally turn into double agents captured VC cadres. This timely and accurate intelligence produced by the Joint Interrogation Center (JIC) was fed to the military which often used it to come to grips with the elusive Viet Cong.

The JIC was a good operation that produced an avalanche of accurate intelligence. The heart of any intelligence service activity is the collection of intelligence information. The glamorous political intrigue and paramilitary operations are just sideshows to the routine collection of intelligence and the grinding out of reports for customers throughout the government. DeForest, over a period of several years, became the king of reporting by mining the rich vein of intelligence information provided by JIC.

JIC was the envy of the rest of the Station, particularly those of us who labored in the provinces. Each province had an interrogation center, the Provincial Interrogation Center (PIC). Unfortunately it was under joint management of the CIA and National Police Special Branch, so results were mixed. Everything depended on the rapport established between the CIA adviser and the Special Branch chief. DeForest was a success in a war that produced major institutional and personal failures. He succeeded because he had the correct background for the assignment, was bright enough to see a solution to the problem of exploiting the flow of available prisoners and defectors, and then had the guts to struggle long enough to make the solution work. He was a former CID officer, had worked with the Japanese Intelligence Service, and served a previous tour in Vietnam. He came to an accommodation with the Vietnamese early on, settled in for a long stay, and got on with his war.

Most CIA officers were not as well prepared for their Vietnam adventure. In fact, most were ineffective. Despite throwing a large number of employees into the war, the CIA never made a real

Continued on page 96



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BULLETIN BOARD



SOF Contributing Editor John Donovan presents retired Brigadier General William Ryder with a lifetime subscription to SOF at 50th Airborne Convention. General Ryder was leader of original U.S. Army parachute test platoon. Convention was sponsored by Don Lassen, publisher of *Static Line* (Dept. SOF, Box 87518, College Park, GA 30337). Photo: courtesy Joe Holloway, Jr.

15 YEARS NEXT MONTH ... Watch for special, enlarged 15th Anniversary Issue of SOF next month. Ask your news dealer to stock up — they will go fast!

HELP HALL HELP GUN RIGHTS ...

Another strong pro-gun SOFer unable to return to this year's convention because he is a candidate is Steve Hall, Republican nominee for the 66th Assembly District in California. He's in an important race to defeat a turncoat pro-cum-anti gun incumbent, and he needs your support. Volunteer to work or help Steve financially at Box 16, Fontana, CA 92334-0016. Steve promises "Together we can reinstate the Constitution in California!"

CASTRO DEPARTURE DATE CONTEST ...

"Castro can either go out like Ceaucescu or Ortega. The decision is his, but *time* is definitely not on his side," says David Hirschmann of the Council of Inter-American Security in Washington. But when will he fall? CIS is, in fact, sponsoring a contest for those who care to predict the date of Fidel's political —or actual — demise. Grand prize will be a four-day, three-night all-expense trip to liberated Havana to help the Cubans celebrate. Enter contest by calling 1-900-988-2800 with *your* prediction, or send a postcard with your entry by 30 September 1990 to: CIS, 122 "C" Street NW, Dept. SOF, Suite 710, Washington, DC 20001. Or call Peter LaBarbera for details at (202) 393-6622.

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION ...

For those assigned or attached to Air Commando or Spec Ops units, including spooks. Limited associate memberships for those who support ACA objectives but not otherwise qualified. Good men and women, worthwhile programs: ACA, 25 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548. Twentieth reunion 5-7 October, with H'mong leader Gen. Vang Pao as guest. Details: Reunion Committee, Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569.

STEIGER FOR GOVERNOR ...

Sam Steiger, SOF auctioneer the past two conventions, had to turn us down this year — he's preoccupied as leading candidate in five-man race for Arizona governorship. Running against two others in Republican primary in September, it is anticipated Steiger will have little trouble defeating the yuppie Democratic candidate, Terry Goddard.

Steiger has a strong position on gun control: "Proper gun control is being able to hit your target," he states. "There are problems currently facing gun owners, hunters and sportsmen in Arizona as elsewhere. Those who would destroy our rights here are more subtle and attack us obliquely — by eliminating more public lands from

hunting and fishing, by locking us out of other private lands through government acquisition, and by attempting to close shooting ranges."

We at SOF wish Steiger the best in his campaign for governor, look forward to seeing *Governor* Steiger at next year's convention.

AMMO CONTRACT FLAP ...

Winchester wondering if FBI really is "Federal" Bureau of Investigation: contract for 10mm ammo let with Federal, although Winchester's bid \$5.9 million less. Winchester asked GAO to test both, reverse bid. Claims theirs is as good at half cost.

RIGHT ON, TIME ...

Recent issue of *Time* had cover story bemoaning youngsters in combat. Didn't bemoan communist tyrants from Hungary to Burma who have made kids pick up arms to fight for liberty, of course, nor mention kids press-ganged by the Viet Cong and FMLN. But they did note only *Soldier of Fortune* and a few fundamentalist church groups cared about the Karens. For once, they're right. ☒

SOFer and USAF vet Kitty Baran gets sworn into California Air National Guard. Kitty's the first female loadmaster in the Air Force, and a veteran of every Las Vegas SOF convention. Come see Kitty bowl 'em over in Pugil Stick competition at the Sahara this year — details on page 64. Photo: California ANG, SSGT Anne Bryant



ALBANIA: Tourist boom, mostly North Koreans — who don't miss banned private autos ... **ANGOLA:** Tepper Airways Hercules L-100 hauling UNITA supplies crashed at Jamba, killing company president ... Preliminary peace talks between UNITA and regime set to be held in Lisbon ... **AUSTRALIA:** North Korean embassy booted over incidents of staff selling drugs. Staff told Aussie authorities they had to pay the bills ... **AUSTRIA:** Head of Stapo (federal police) revealed some 600-700 investigations per year conducted since early '60s at request of Austrian companies or foreign embassies — pithy info such as that Franz Jonas attended party with holes in his socks before he became president in '65 ... **BANGLADESH:** Rival student groups fired pistols, homemade bombs at each other at Dhaka University, three killed ... **BRAZIL:** Sending 21 officers as military observers with U.N. force overseeing Nicaraguan ceasefire ... **CANADA:** Vancouver judge ordered Khalistani activist Inderjit Singh to stand trial for 1985 bombing of Tokyo airport ... **CHILE:** 49 convicted terrorists tunneled out of Santiago prison — would have been more, but a fat one got stuck in tunnel. Most recaptured ... **COLOMBIA:** Dept. Administrative Security issued arrest warrants for Brits Brian Tompkins, Peter McAleese, accused of training paramilitary forces for cartel at base near Magdalena ... **CUBA:** Vladimir Orlov of *Moscow News* notes Cuba more stable than other socialist societies, with network of committees for defense of revolution to track down people who listen to foreign radio, hold "politically immature conversations" ... Another shipment of new MiG-29s has arrived, older Cuban MiG-23s scheduled to go to Nicaragua put on hold ... **EGYPT:** Islamic militants have launched campaign against belly-dancing, threatened violence. Many star performers employing round-the-clock bodyguards. Volunteers? ... U.S. Army selling Egypt 700 M60A1 tanks for a flat \$1 million (\$1450 each) ... **ETHIOPIA:** Marxist maximum leader Col. Mengistu calling for return to private enterprise — too little, too late ... **FRANCE:** 60 armed, masked Corsican National Liberation Front (FNLC) hoodlums took over tourist village of Corsicana Foret, rounded up the people and

blew 60 bungalows ... **FRG:** West German public prosecutor investigating if design for submarine done for India was secretly flogged to South Africa; Indians say it was, S. Africans say no ... **GDR:** Former East German communist regime accused of big-time arms and drug trafficking — used diplomatic vehicles to carry dope into FRG ... **GREECE:** New conservative government reducing draft to 15 months ... **GUYANA:** Under Marxist President Desmond Hoyte, has replaced Haiti as poorest nation in Western Hemisphere ... **HAITI:** Shakeup in military hierarchy, 22 new appointments ... **INDIA:** Punjabi police commandant Gobind Ram killed by chair bomb ... **INDONESIA:** Special "control centers for social disturbance" being revived, internal security body *Bakorstanas* being augmented by "national stability inspectors" in response to recent disturbances ... **IRAN:** Has announced plans to build a submarine fleet within five years ... **IRAQ:** Pursuing advanced ballistic missile program hand-in-glove with nuke/chemwar development ... **ITALY:** Will lift 1981 embargo on 10 frigates and corvettes for delivery to Iraq, throws in 10 Augusta choppers for making them wait ... **JAPAN:** Homemade rockets fired at Tokyo residence of Emperor Akihito's brother ... **JORDAN:** Forming "Pan Arab Squadron" from Jordanian and Iraqi air assets, Israelis worried ... **KUWAIT:** Pressure building to reopen National Assembly, suspended several times since its inception in 1963 ... **NETHERLANDS:** Poll indicates one-third of deaths come from euthanasia ... **NICARAGUA:** Sandinistas have formed "25 February Contingent" — new terrorist group named for day they lost election — just in case ... **NORTH KOREA:** Farmers ordered to cultivate marijuana in program to get hard currency ... Another tunnel under DMZ discovered; 2,000 feet long, estimated five years to build ... **NORTHERN IRELAND:** IRA claims responsibility for bombing East Belfast missile factory of Short Brothers PLC, a British defense contractor belonging to Montreal-based Bombardier, Inc ... **PAKISTAN:** Dozens of automatic rifles, 37 AT missiles found in Karachi sewer stash ... Sabotage now suspected in January rail crash that killed 400 ... Paks buying 50 Mirage 1110 fighters from Australia for \$27

million, want fast delivery due to fighting with India over Kashmir ... **PANAMA:** New terrorist group M-20 claims credit for grenade into disco that killed one, injured 16 GIs; also takes credit for chopper crash last February that killed 11, vows to strike again ... **PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** Terrorist attacks, bombings, sabotage, assassinations ... **PERU:** 200 fed-up peasants near Conception armed with sickles and sticks ambushed 13 Shining Path guerrillas — delivered their heads to army ... **PHILIPPINES:** News correspondents to lose favorite dateline — pending legislation will rename town of Sexmoan to *Sasmuan* ... **POLAND:** Anarchists rampaged through Warsaw, smashing windows at senate, communist party HQ, stormed luxury hotel ... **ROMANIA:** Member of National Peasant Party tortured, had tongue cut out, then hacked to death after putting up party poster in Moldavia ... **SWEDEN:** Soviet subs still playing hide-and-seek with Swedish navy in their waters ... **SWITZERLAND:** Red Brigade member Antonio de Luca will be extradited to Italy to stand trial ... **THAILAND:** Two teams of assassins shot three Saudi diplomats in central Bangkok ... **TURKEY:** Islamic Revenge takes credit for murder of moderate Prof. Muammer Aksoy ... 40 education officials sacked for promoting radical fundamentalism ... 15 air force officers court-martialed for setting up Islamic cells ... Fears are such radical influence may spread after shutout by EEC ... **USSR:** Scheduled pro-democracy demonstration looked like it might get out of hand; Soviet TV aired Polish porno movie "The Sex Mission" at same time — it worked. Of 500,000 expected, only 100,000 were demonstrating, 400,000 were perestroking ... KGB border guards discovered dozen new T-72 tanks, complete with leading-edge ceramic armor, labeled "cargo for re-smelting" on freighter headed for western Europe. One senior official involved shot already, others sweating ... Muslim fundamentalists in Azerbaijan have stolen choppers, small arms, recently attacked nuclear weapons storage facility at Baku, shot down one chopper with captured rocket ... **ZIMBABWE:** House of ill repute blown up in Bulawayo, demolishing 32 of 64 rooms ... one killed ... no SOF staffers injured. ☒

SOF: MAXIMUM SOURCE ... I am a former 82d Airborne sergeant, OCS graduate and Ranger who has been selected to complete graduate school en route to an assignment as an instructor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

I started the manuscript *On Killing: The Price and Process of Killing in Combat* as my Master's Report in psychology. One of this study's most valuable sources of individual narratives has been the pages of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*. I have long been a fan of your magazine, and when one veteran (an active-duty Army colonel I interviewed as part of my research) suggested *Soldier of Fortune* as a reference source, and offered to loan me his complete collection, I was quick to take him up on it.

I have demonstrated in this study that the image of the Vietnam veteran being spit on, insulted, degraded, and psychologically traumatized upon return to the U.S. is not an urban myth, but is based upon countless thousands of incidents. In this environment of condemnation and accusation, many Vietnam veterans had only one national forum in which they could attain some degree of psychological closure by writing of their experiences in a

sympathetic and non-judgmental environment, and that forum was *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*. I believe that writing and reading these first-person accounts provided an extremely powerful form of therapy for the Vietnam Vet, and deeply respect the courage and fortitude it took to publish such narratives over the last 15 years. One of the things that I would like to do with this book is to help make our nation aware of the unsung, thankless service SOF has performed over the last 15 years.

Thanks and God Bless,
David A. Grossman
Captain, Infantry
U.S. Army

CAN SECESSION SUCCEED? ... I certainly agree with Robert K. Brown's July editorial concerning the outbreak of independence/secession movements around the world as "threats" to the superpowers — as far as the article went.

The closest you came to hitting home about a possible world-wide independence movement was "Can Puerto Rico leave the United States?" *Puerto Rico??*

You seem to forget that just as the Soviets overran Eastern Europe in

1940, so did the Federals overrun the 13 Confederate States in 1865. For 125 years, the South has been shackled to a government that they had not freely chosen, been the object of armed occupation and ever more repressive laws (not to mention the subject of constant belittling and finger-pointing by Hollywood and the rest of the media).

Whether this oppression comes from Moscow or Washington doesn't really matter. The "powers that be" have tried to mold the South into its own image just as Moscow has done with Lithuania.

I thank God there are some who still love freedom and can see the true state of affairs. Can you?

James M. McCoy
Big Lake, Texas

I'm going to have to disagree with your parallel between how the Southern States got to be part of the United States and how Lithuania got to be part of the Soviet Union. The Southern States either were part of the original founding states of the United States or voluntarily joined — not at all the case of Lithuania, Latvia, etc. Even the Republic of Texas asked to join the union, albeit with some intriguing reservations and conditions, and there's a difference between asking for a divorce from a voluntary union and escaping a kidnapper. But I agree with your distaste for culture and politics by suppository from the self-appointed elite, and if you'd care to selectively secede from Washington, New York and Hollywood I'll join you in a flash.

ALL THE WAY FOR 50 YEARS ... I write to express my thanks and appreciation for the scroll and subscription you presented to me in Atlanta, Georgia, during the Airborne Awards Banquet.

It was indeed an honor for me to be recognized by you and the community of professional military men you represent.

Although, I repeat that *all* awards made to me were symbolic in nature, with my serving as a historical "custodian" on behalf of all Airborne troopers.

Nonetheless it was most gratifying to be acknowledged by *Soldier of Fortune*



AS SEEN ON TV

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Slick 50, the space-age miracle engine treatment applauded by Consumer's Digest magazine, prestigious independent laboratories throughout the world, and over 15-million satisfied automobile, truck, RV, boat, and heavy equipment users, is now available to you.

One treatment with Slick 50 can cut your engine wear in half and make your engine run smoother, quieter, faster, and cooler than ever before. Slick 50 makes an unmistakable difference you can hear and feel in both newer and older cars.

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PTFE is an abbreviation for polytetrafluoroethylene. The Guinness Book of World Records calls PTFE the slipperiest solid substance known to man—the equivalent of wet ice on wet ice. The Space Shuttle Columbia uses PTFE in its gears and bearings because it's the only chemical lubricant that can withstand the heat and corrosive elements of space. It won't rust, is immune to acids and alkalines, and the more pressure it's under, the more slippery it becomes.

Slick 50's unique actuated formulation bonds these powerful PTFE resins to the mechanical surfaces of all internal combustion gasoline and diesel engines, creating a strong, protective coating that can dramatically reduce friction and wear.

7 Ways Slick 50 Can Save You Money and Increase Reliability

Although individual results may vary, tests have shown that Slick 50 effectively:

1. Reduces gas consumption.
2. Prolongs battery life by decreasing drag on starter, resulting in less amperage being required for start-up. (Makes cold weather starts faster and easier.)
3. Helps extend the life of internal metal, mechanical engine parts.
4. Lowers peak engine operating temperatures, helping to prevent overheating and oil breakdown even under the most demanding conditions.
5. Increases horsepower and compression (especially important for small economy cars and large RVs).
6. Lowers maintenance costs, reduces repairs, and minimizes or eliminates costly overhauls.
7. Makes an automobile last longer and keeps its resale value high.

How to Conquer Your Engine's #1 Enemy—Lubrication Starvation

Slick 50 is a metal treatment that bonds actuated PTFE to all mechanical moving engine parts, creating a strong, durable, lasting, dry-film protective coating that provides full-time lubrication even when there is insufficient oil on the parts like at start-up and when engine heat has broken down the oil. Instead of metal rubbing against metal, PTFE glides against PTFE, reducing friction and wear. It is this unique ability of Slick 50 to dramatically reduce friction that's responsible for its cutting engine wear by 50% or more.

Most Often Asked Questions About Slick 50

How is Slick 50 applied?

Slick 50 is easy to use. At your next oil and filter change, simply substitute one quart of Slick 50 for one quart of new oil being added. Drive the car for 30 minutes, and leave Slick 50 in the crankcase. As the engine operates, the oil will carry Slick 50 throughout the engine where it bonds to the porous metal surfaces.

Does it have to be used with every oil change?

Certainly not. One treatment with Slick 50 provides anti-wear protection for more than 50,000 miles. It remains bonded to the engine parts no matter how many times the oil is changed.



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- IMPROVE PERFORMANCE
- SAVE THOUSANDS OF \$\$\$ ON REPAIR BILLS, MAINTENANCE & OVERHAULS

■ The premiere EPA-recognized engine and lubricant testing lab in the U.S. conducted a strictly-controlled experiment using industry standard ASTM procedures. They found that a Slick 50-treated engine showed 50% less engine wear than an untreated engine and fuel consumption was reduced. To our knowledge, it is the only product of its kind to pass the punishing wear reduction tests conducted by an EPA-approved lab using nationally accepted ASTM standard procedures.

■ The Automotive Services Council for Pennsylvania torture-tested Slick 50 and televised the astounding results on WTVE. Three cars, with 75,000 to 129,000 miles on their odometers, were treated with Slick 50. Six months later, the oil was drained from each vehicle, and the cars were driven, without the oil plugs, for about a half hour. The water temperature never rose, and the engines sustained no apparent damage.

Testimonials

■ Increased Power Wins Races

Dirt track champion, winner of over 40 modified stock car racing events and recent winner of 11 races in 15 starts, says: "We've tested lots of products and found Slick 50 to be the best there is. It allows us to push the car to the limit and not be worried about hurting the motor."

Andy Belmont, NASCAR "Rookie of the Year"
National Champion NASCAR
Charlotte/Daytona Dash Series

■ Increased Gas Mileage by 20%

■ Fewer Repairs & No Major Breakdowns in 200,000-Mile-Plus Fleet Vehicles

"Our newspaper has a fleet of 65 vehicles that have been completely treated with Slick 50 products, including engines, automatic or manual transmissions and differential drive gear boxes. As a result of the treatment, gasoline mileage increased by 20%, and engine breakdown decreased tremendously."

■ Eliminated Repairs on Police Cars

■ Fuel Savings

"Thank you for the cost-effective, budget-saving benefits of Slick 50 engine treatment. I bought the product about four years ago for treating our city police cars. Since that time, we are happy to say, all car engines have been virtually trouble free. They haven't needed any repairs at all. Also our fuel savings have been noticeable."

Money-Back Guarantee

Now your car can run better, faster, quieter, smoother, and last longer than ever before. And you could easily save thousands of dollars in gasoline, maintenance, and repair bills. Find out for yourself why over 15-million people are excited about Slick 50. We're so sure you'll be excited too, that we offer a 100% money-back guarantee. Call or write today.

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Does Slick 50 have any affect on automobile warranties?

No. The use of Slick 50 does not in any way affect a car's warranty. Petrolon, the manufacturers of Slick 50, has letters on file from automobile and engine manufacturers to document that fact. Slick 50 carrier oil meets or exceeds all specifications that Detroit applies to products added to an engine. New engines need at least a 3- to 4-thousand mile burnishing-in period. Slick 50 should not be added until the first oil change.

Internationally-Recognized Labs Unanimously Agree on Slick 50 Benefits

■ *Consumer's Digest Magazine* in the March/April 1982 issue, stated: "We were somewhat skeptical at first, but it turns out that Slick 50 does exactly what Petrolon, the manufacturer, claims it does. In fact, the more we looked, the more facts stacked up on the product's side. The substance does, in fact, suspend the oil and will adhere to engine parts. The process by which this is accomplished is a closely-guarded secret.... Slick 50 does reduce engine heat and ordinary wear, and our informal tests indicate that it will improve gas mileage by about 2 or 3 miles per gallon."

■ *TUV, the West German equivalent of our Underwriter's Laboratories and foremost automotive testing authority in Europe*, found substantial increases in both gas mileage and horsepower resulting from a reduction in friction.

■ *Nordisk Motor Test Center, Sweden's most advanced motor-testing facility*, reported a 10% to 17% decrease in fuel consumption and attributes to Slick 50, "better sealed engines, performance increases and cleaner exhaust."



When the U.S. Army liberated western Czechoslovakia from the Nazis 45 years ago, restaurateur Frantisek Jung of Pilsen rolled out the barrels he had been hiding from the Germans and popped the bungs for thirsty GIs, above. Photo: F.R. Jung, courtesy T. Lugsova

in Airborne's 50th Anniversary Year. And, I will cherish the scroll ... and enjoy the magazine for the remainder of my days.

My wife, Muriel, joins me in expressing her thanks for your thoughtfulness.

Cordially,
Bill Ryder

General, it was an honor for me to acknowledge your 50 years of service to the Airborne community, from your leadership of the first Airborne test platoon in 1940 to present, and I hope you enjoy reading SOF for another 50 years. — RKB

NO SWEAT, NO THREAT? ... I am an 18-year-old student who will be attending the U.S. Naval Academy next year. I have followed developments in our government and I fail to understand why our leaders suddenly regard the USSR and its allies as almost "harmless." I am no expert on Soviet intentions or military capability but I fail to see why we're cutting our troop levels so drastically that there has even been some speculation on pulling U.S. troops out of Europe. Has the Soviet Union changed that much?

I have read enough of Soviet history that this sort of "openness" is never really what it seems. I would like to

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know if the Warsaw Pact has gotten so weak and fragile that we should reduce our forces, or if we are just trying to reduce the deficit at the cost of American safety and that of freedom around the world. It's nice to think about the world being a peaceful place, but this kind of naive optimism could spell disaster.

John McClellan
Atlanta, Georgia

Hey, kid, you sure you're only 18? There have been some genuine changes in the USSR and the ComBloc countries, but in the Soviet Union they were caused by economic necessity and burgeoning freedom movements, not because the nomenklatura suddenly decided to give up world conquest. And there they have been more of form than substance, especially relative to "disarmament." In the European satellites, they evidently realized they couldn't fight umpteen brush fires at once and decided to settle for using them as buffer states, and are withdrawing substantial numbers of troops. SOFer Tom Bates just returned from an extended trip to the ComEcon countries and reports that once the Sovs leave the satellite countries, they may well have to fight their way back in. Watch for his articles in upcoming issues. Good luck at Annapolis. ✕



Now that Eastern Bloc countries are free to choose their own friends a WWII Jeep again leads parade through Pilsen to open 45th anniversary celebration of liberation of Western Czechoslovakia from Nazis by Americans. Some recent changes are cosmetic, some are real. The friendship has always been real. Photo: CSTK/Jiri Berger, courtesy T. Lugsova

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I WAS THERE

by Steve Lopata

Buying Hearts and Mines

IT was Winter 1968. I was in charge of the demolitions squad of Echo Company, 289th Engineer Battalion. Six mornings each week one of our missions was to sweep half of the 30 kilometers of Highway QL14 between Kontum and Dak To for mines.

If there is anything a demo man dislikes more than shovel and saw work, it is unpleasant noisy surprises buried in roads. And when we found them we had to blow them in place, which meant half an hour's despised shoveling to repair the hole in the road.

One afternoon, over a table of Ba Muoi Ba beers, we had a brilliant idea. Vietnamese were setting the mines, let Vietnamese help clear them. We would appeal to their natural human greed by offering a reward for each explosive device turned in to the authorities (us). Captain Jenkins liked the idea and so did the Kontum contingent of Military Intelligence.

Amazingly, the recommendation went up through 18th Brigade and returned approved in only two weeks. We were authorized to pay 500 piastres (\$2.50 - \$3.00) for each device turned in. Since the idea had come from my squad, we were put in charge of collection, with Lieutenant French, our platoon leader, holding the money. We had posters printed announcing the policy.

At around 1700 the first Monday after the posters had been circulated, we set up a table at the highway turnoff to our cantonment. At first, only a couple of old French mines from the '50s were turned in. But soon our no-questions-asked payment policy began to pull in the good stuff.

By the beginning of February, we were buying an average of five pieces per day. They varied from spent artillery shells to new antipersonnel mines. The number of mines on our stretch of QL14 had dropped 80%. The job was getting to be what every soldier loves — boring.

Sometime in late February, I noticed that we had a "regular." Each evening, a boy between 9 and 11 years old would bring something to sell. The pieces were always good. They varied from AP mines to one big Czech antitank mine he dragged in on a board.

I liked the kid's looks, and I started giving him a little something extra, like a bar of tropical chocolate or a can or two

of C-rations. In turn, he began to hang back so that our little extra transaction could be conducted in private, after most of the others had left. A few words of conversation, but never his name. That kid was a survivor. Canny like a city rat.

After a week or so, when I had won



Tough, smart survivors like the boy in this story are familiar characters to most of us who served in Vietnam. The young man in the photo, as you can tell from his pose, was a close friend of Bob Brown in 1969. Photo: Robert K. Brown

his trust to the point where he would share a Coke with me, I popped the question. "Kid, I think you know where a lot of that stuff could be found."

His eyes blazed and he backed out of arm's reach. "No. Know nothing."

"Wait. I want to deal. You think about how much you want for the whole thing at one time. When you're ready, tell me. 'Till then business as usual."

He backed out further. "Me don't know. Not deal. Nothing!"

When he left that evening, he looked over his shoulder. I knew that he would probably not even go home. He would not lead anyone to his family. But he would be back.

I went to MI. The Staff Sergeant in charge liked the idea of locating a big cache. It took him just one call on his field phone to get authorization for us to deal with the kid. He wouldn't tell me his ceiling but said that I could mention a thousand bucks up front just to get his attention.

The kid was back on Monday. Hanging to the back of the line, like nothing

had happened. He hung around after the payoff and we broke out the sodas. When I mentioned a thousand U.S. dollars, he shook his head. I told him that I would have to get permission to go higher.

The kid was back the next day with another device and a demand to negotiate directly with the money man. It must have taken guts to get into that jeep and ride off. He did not know for sure if we would deal or just beat it out of him.

I would not have heard the end of the matter except for the fact that the cache was underground. Without the services of tunnel rats, the engineers were called in to make things as safe as possible for guys going in. They led us out to a bamboo grove, half a klick from the highway. In the center was a small door disguised by a mat of bamboo leaves. After the appropriate preliminaries, I was able to assure MI that we had been told the truth in that: a) there were no traps, b) no one had shot at me as I looked, and c) there was more ordinance in there than I had ever seen in one place.

We set guards and went in. Have you ever seen anyone jump for joy? The Staff Sergeant did that day — he did a little dance, shuffling in a circle and hopping on one foot, then the other, saying, "Oh boy, oh boy." There were cases marked in Cyrillic letters, file cabinets and all kinds of weapons. After a careful second look around, I took the kid outside.

I sat in a truck and he hunkered by the side of the road. When I lit a cigarette, he stuck out his hand for one and I lit him up too. The first few puffs were in silent enjoyment.

"Kid, if you are smart, you should get the hell away from here."

He nodded. "Family move far. South. Change name. No one know."

"How did you find this place?"

He grinned. It was the first time that I had seen him smile. "No find. GI. No find."

"Well, how did you know that it was here?"

The smile disappeared. "You no tell. Nobody."

I stuck out my hand. "No tell. Deal."

The grin came back. "My uncle he VC. No like work. No like shoot at. He tell. Give me 100 dong to put mine. Sell you for 500. Gimme 'nother cigarette." ✕

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ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by Tom Slizewski

ANNIVERSARY KNIFE ... Dedicated craftsmen at Camillus Cutlery Company are carefully making, by hand, a limited edition set of finely crafted, authentic combat knives commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II. Presented in a genuine oak display case, the set includes the Navy Mark 2, the M-3 Army trench knife, the Marine combat knife, and the Air Force pilot survival knife. All are inlaid with 18 karat gold U.S. service seals. To order your limited edition set, contact Camillus Cutlery Co., Dept. SOF, Camillus, NY 13031.

REPLICA GATLING ... Replica guns and swords have been increasing in popularity over the last few years. That's good news for Collector's Armoury, which specializes in producing such items. Their latest is a 1:5 scale replica of the famous Gatling gun. The replica measures 14 inches long by 10 inches wide and is 8½ inches high. Weight is 4½ pounds. As on the real thing, the replica has 10 rotating barrels. Cost is \$159 from Collector's Armoury Inc., Dept. SOF, PO Box 59, Alexandria, VA 22313.



◀SLICK DEAL ...

According to the latest SOF subscriber survey, over 90 percent purchased motor oil for their cars and trucks in the last year. A firm called Slick 50 took notice of this fact and is offering SOF readers their space-age miracle engine treatment applauded by Consumer's Digest, independent laboratories and over 15 million satisfied car, truck, RV, boat and heavy equipment users. They've been offering consumers a superior product for over 12 years. See their ad in this issue.

heavy equipment users. They've been offering consumers a superior product for over 12 years. See their ad in this issue.



◀NEW AND DIFFERENT

GUNS ...If you're tuned into what's new and different in the world of guns you've likely already seen the hype about Ram-Line's .22-caliber Syn-Tech pistol. All the fuss seems to be focused on the fact that it weighs only 21 ounces. Half this total is polymer, a

heavy-duty plastic compound, while the rest is quality steel and aircraft-grade aluminum. Other features are a 15-round magazine with constant-force spring, "dynamic contour" grip, 5½-inch barrel and thumb safety. It's reasonably priced at \$199.97 from Ram-Line, Inc., Dept. SOF, 15611 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO 80401.

LASER DEVICES ... Laser sights have become all the rage with a vast segment of the shooting community. Laser Devices, Inc., hasn't missed this opportunity and just recently introduced its newest model — the FA-4. Compact, lightweight at just 3.5 ounces (with batteries), the FA-4 should prove a sure seller. It's made from Teflon impregnated, anodized aluminum and has built-in rings that will fit all Weaver bases. A special mount also allows it to be fitted to any bow. Contact: Laser Devices, Inc., Dept. SOF, Monterey Research Park, 2 Harris Court, Suite A4, Monterey, CA 93940; phone (408) 373-0701.



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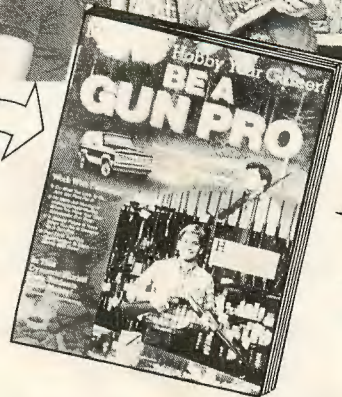
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by Joe Cavanaugh



Wading in the stream, this Central American native spears fresh-water lobster (crayfish).

FOR an adventurer wandering the jungles of Central and South America, hunger can be an inglorious reality. There is seldom "plenty to go around" and the most aggressive and resourceful jungle man will eat best. Knowing your environment and what it offers can make the difference.

We will discuss ways to put meat in the pot with and without the use of firearms or excessive noise, as there are times in the jungle when the key to survival is remaining silent.

One of the most reliable sources of protein in the jungle is fish, but finding bait can be harder than catching the fish. Poor topsoil in the jungle makes digging for earthworms hard, but hellgramites, snails, leeches and other small animals can be found along the shoreline. Fruits and nuts often have worms or larvae. Caterpillars are common (watch out for the hairy ones). Small minnows can be used for bait, as can offal from cleaned fish. In the Amazon basin, pirahna can be hooked with just about any flesh. Without hooks and line, grenades work fine if the tactical situation permits.

Another method of fishing is spearing, best at night in clear water, with a light. At night, crayfish are the main target, but look carefully along the shores by rocks and logs for sleeping fish. A spear can be made of bicycle spokes, nails or whatever, lashed to a stick. Wading quietly at night in a stream or along the shore of a lake can produce fish, crayfish and frogs.

Other sources of silent protein in the jungle are turtles, lizards, snakes and alligators. Many locals in Central America dive for river turtles and catch them by hand, follow their tracks up the bank to nests of eggs, or use cage-type traps.

Iguanas are another easy meal. Iguanas can be caught by just plain goin' after 'em. One man climbs up a tree and shakes it out or makes it jump down on its own, and the men on the ground harvest it with rocks, clubs, machetes. When laying their eggs in burrows along the river banks, iguanas can be caught by hand. The eggs are also edible.

Snakes can also be caught silently. However, poisonous snakes or unidentified snakes should only be caught by pinning the head with a forked stick on its neck and decapitating it. Walking up to a poisonous snake and trying to whack him with a 2-foot machete can be suicide.

Alligators and caymans can be killed with a machete or harpoon, also done at night with a light. Two men in a dugout canoe, one paddling and one scanning with the light, can do it. Once their beady little red eyes are spotted, you glide up to them quietly and the front man whacks them in the head with a machete. Larger alligators can be speared with a long stick with a removable, barbed harpoon tip (one can be made from a discarded file.) The tip should be secured to a sturdy rope or cable. They can also be caught with a cable noose on the end of a long stick — slip the noose over their snout and pull it tight.

A cable snare is a good lightweight survival item to have in your backpack. There are many raccoon-sized animals



Native hunter burns a peccary to prepare it for cleaning. Jungle pigs are as good as lowa pigs, if properly prepared.

in the jungle that can be caught with one. One of the most abundant and most easily snared is the gibnut (*paca*). This nocturnal mammal lives in caves, hollow logs or burrows. Setting a snare at the entrance to his den is a good way to eat meat, and they are some of the best eating there is. The jungle, however, is

very competitive, and with the many scavengers and predators, a snare cannot be left long unattended.

What a man eats in the jungle could very well depend on what a man has brought with him or how he improvises with what he finds. Of course, you'll have a machete with you so you can run down an opossum or armadillo. But did you take some cable off that downed aircraft to make a snare set for gibnut? Did you cut a few strips of inner tube rubber off that discarded bicycle you passed? Slingshots can bag small songbirds and lizards for roasting even if you are inside the confines of a perimeter.

There will be times you have a firearm and won't be in any immediate threat of revealing your location by using it. Hunting for survival in the jungles of Central and South America is completely practical. Small groups of men can go out and deliberately hunt, or game may be encountered by chance, as patrols or even large groups travel through the jungle. Jungle warfare requires groups of men to travel in a column. The men in front of the column are usually far enough from the main group that noise and commotion do not alert game at the point. A typical North American adventurer in the jungles of Central or South America (for whatever reason), would probably be moving with a small group of men. Typically, it would not be the kind of crowd that makes a lot of noise and spooks game.

One can hunt at night with the aid of artificial lights. Most game shot by chance is shot in the day. Night hunting is usually more deliberate, using such methods as hunting (walk slowly, stop, look, listen) along a jungle path or streambed, or waiting in ambush at a location where game will pass or return for food or water.

The wild pigs (peccaries) of Latin America are some of the best species to hunt. They are relatively large and travel in groups, allowing more than one to be taken at once. Their flesh is tasty and fat. Fat provides a lot of energy and most wilderness diets become deficient in fats before anything else. There are two species of peccary in Central and South America: the common collared peccary (javelina) and the white-lipped peccary. Either

Continued on page 20



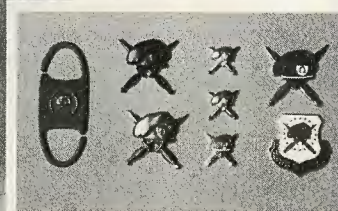
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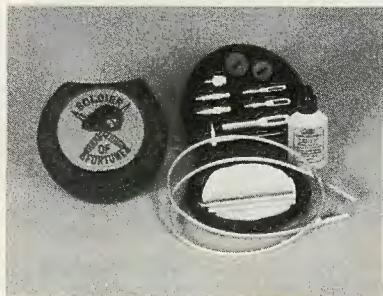
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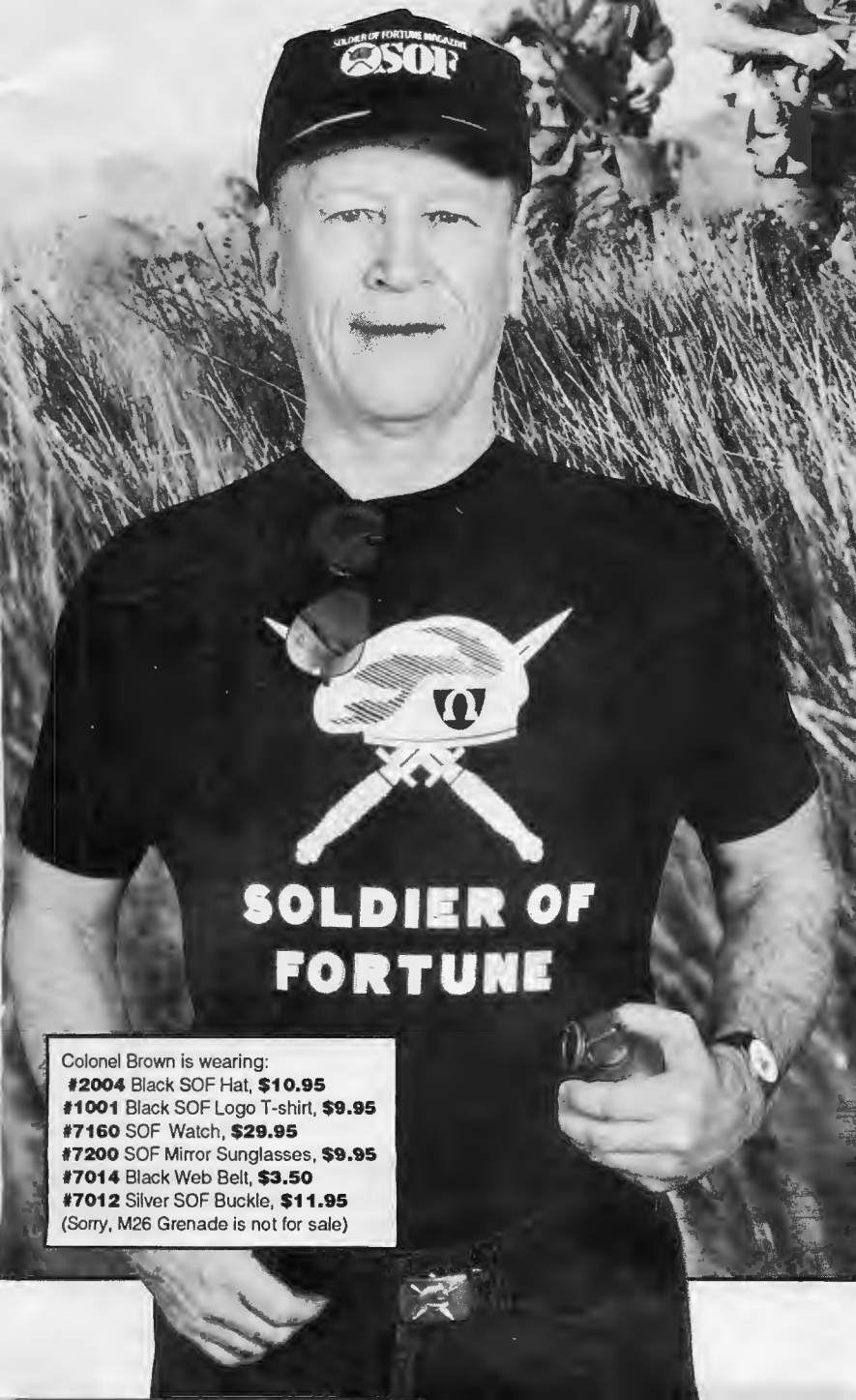
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Continued from page 17

species can be taken in ambush at a water hole or feeding area, or found by chance on the move.

The smaller collared peccary weighs 30-60 pounds. Their fresh sign can indicate where they have been feeding, and they can be expected to return. Morning and evening are always the best time to hunt them. Wild pigs can be cleaned by either skinning or scraping the hair off after they have been scalded with hot water or singed over open flame. It is best to scrape or singe off the hair so no fat is lost, and the rind helps protect the meat from insects and spoilage.

The key to preparing collared peccary is to let them "settle" after shooting — do not touch until the hair settles down and flattens out. Moving them before their hair settles down will send a rank odor throughout the meat.

The white-lipped peccary secretes a very strong odor from a scent gland on its back. The gland can easily be



A hunter with two tinamou. Feathers, fur, fins: the jungle deli provides it all.

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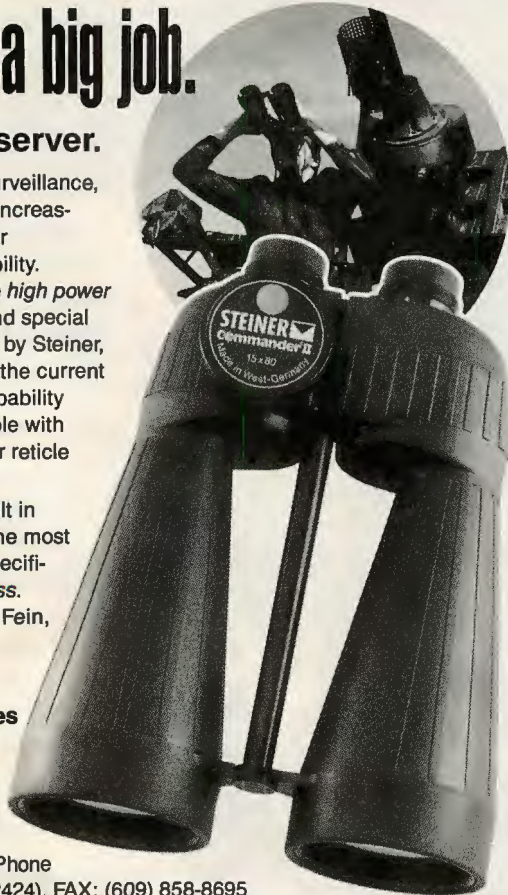
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removed and the odor does not readily pass into the meat. It has a very pungent odor and can often be detected by a hunter before the hogs are visible. The white-lipped peccary, called *warrie* by the Creole people along the Caribbean Coast or *jabali* in Spanish, is a large peccary weighing between 60 and 120 pounds. They travel in large groups of up to 80 or more individuals. Warrie have long sharp teeth and are mean and aggressive — they can be considered dangerous. Warrie can be hunted by conventional methods or they can be tracked down. A large group of these animals leaves an incredible amount of sign that can be followed for long distances. Usually right before you see them you will either smell or hear them. Warrie make a variety of grunts and clack their tusks together when spooked. Sometimes a group of men can get inside a large herd of peccary spread out foraging and enough meat can be collected to last for days. The meat can be salted and smoked and it is as tasty as any store-bought ham.

Continued on page 73

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MAVERICK 9MM

Penny Wise, Three Pounds Foolish

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

YOU don't buy much in the way of esthetics for \$169.00. Don't expect a large-capacity "wondermine" for that price either. But, believe it or not, for \$169.00 you can purchase the new Maverick Model JS 9mm Parabellum semiautomatic pistol.

Without doubt, this is the ugliest, most ungainly clunker I have ever fired. It has but one redeeming grace: if you restrict its diet to Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) round-nose bullets, it is reliable. However, is the price you pay for the loss of desired, and by now almost standard, features worth the price you pay?

Manufactured in the U.S. by Stallard Arms, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1996,

Mansfield, OH 44901), the Maverick Model JS operates by means of unlocked blowback with a fixed barrel. This is somewhat unusual as the 9mm Parabellum cartridge can approach chamber pressures of 35,700 cup (copper units of pressure). Blowback-operated handguns are rarely chambered for cartridges generating more pressure than the .380 ACP (18,900 cup). Both the blowback-operated Dreyse and Astra 600 pistols were chambered for the 9mm Parabellum round. They depend upon a heavy recoil spring to retard breech opening until pressures have reached a safe level. In the case of the Maverick, the slide's rearward travel is retarded by its

Perceived recoil is moderate as the Maverick weighs 48 ounces. However, it will not feed JHP bullets with any degree of acceptable reliability *and the trigger weight* is far too heavy.

great mass.

The Maverick pistol, empty, weighs 48 ounces. Its huge slide takes half of this total. In other words, the Maverick's slide alone weighs almost as much as a Glock pistol! Overall length of this monster is 7.6 inches with a height of 5.6 inches. At its widest point (the grip portion of the frame), the Maverick is about 1.1 inches thick.

In an effort to keep costs to a minimum,

every feature of this pistol, including its method and material of construction, has been held to the most sparse levels. Both the frame and slide are made of a non-ferrous alloy. The slide has a black baked "crackle" finish. There is a steel insert in the slide's breech face. Very little besides the barrel, extractor, firing pin, springs, grip screws, slide retainer and some of the trigger mechanism's components is made of steel. Counting the frame and fixed barrel as one, and not counting the magazine, the Maverick has only 23 parts. This remarkable simplicity is a double-edged sword as many attributes required of a serious self-defense handgun have been compromised.

The slide's retracting serrations are deep and adequate. The sights, also integral with the slide casting, are not. The front sight blade, 0.14 inches wide, rises only 0.06 inches from the slide's top rib. Its top surface is not level and on our test specimen slopes to the right. The open square-notch rear sight is 0.12 inches wide and 0.10 inches high. The sight radius is 6.6 inches. Numerous small pocket pistols are equipped with higher profile and more efficient sights than the Maverick.

This pistol is hammerless and striker-fired. Its spring-retracted firing pin also serves as the ejector as it protrudes through its opening in the breech face during the last 0.20 inches of the slide's rearward travel. The extractor appears to be a sheet-metal pressing. It has a thickness of 0.90 inches, is powered by a coil spring and pivots on a steel axis pin driven down through a hole in the top of the slide.

The plastic grip panels have a textured surface and are each held to the frame by an allen-head screw. A 5/64-inch allen-head wrench is required for their removal, but not provided. A pity, as they loosen after only a few rounds have been fired.

The trigger is made of plastic and pivots on a steel pin driven into the frame. Pulling the trigger cams the sear down and out of its retaining notch on the firing pin, permitting the compressed firing pin spring to drive the striker forward. A checkered, sheet-metal safety lever, located on the upper portion of the left grip panel, can be pivoted upward to block the trigger and the slide.



Cost-effective, but ungainly, the Maverick Model JS 9mm Parabellum pistol is blowback-operated and lacks most of the attributes now demanded of a self-defense semi-auto.

MAVERICK MODEL JS SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:**9mm Parabellum.
- Operation:**Unlocked blowback; hammerless, striker-fired.
- Feed mechanism:**Eight-round, single-line, detachable box-type magazine; no indicator holes; no provision for disassembly.
- Barrel length:**4.3 inches.
- Overall length:**7.6 inches.
- Height:**5.6 inches.
- Width:**1.1 inches.
- Weight, empty:**48 ounces.
- Sights:**Fixed; low profile; open square-notch rear.
- Finish:**Frame: semi-gloss black anodized; slide: baked black "crackle" enamel; barrel: baked black semi-gloss enamel.
- Price:**\$169 with one magazine.
- Manufacturer:**Stallard Arms, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1996, Mansfield, OH 44901.
- T&E Summary:**Heavy and ungainly; unacceptably heavy trigger pull weight degrades accuracy potential; inadequate sights; awkward disassembly procedures; functions reliably only with round-nose bullets. Not recommended.



Maverick Model JS 9mm Parabellum semiauto pistol, field-stripped.

There is no hold-open mechanism, but this lever can be rotated up into another notch on the slide to manually hold it rearward after it has been retracted by hand. The trigger pull-weight on SOF's test specimen was a spongy and horrendous 13½ pounds. This has a decidedly adverse effect on accuracy potential.

The single-column, detachable, box-type magazine holds eight rounds. The body, without indicator holes, and floorplate are made of sheet-metal. The floorplate has a drain hole, but is not designed for disassembly. The follower is made of plastic. Only one magazine is provided with the pistol.

The magazine catch-release is made of plastic and is located at the heel of the grip-frame in the European manner. It must be pushed rearward to release the magazine, which will then fall freely away.

Unless you have an assistant, disassembly of the Maverick pistol is a nightmare. First remove the magazine and clear the pistol by retracting and then releasing the slide. With one hand hold the frame. With your second hand retract the slide to within an 1/8-inch of fully rearward. This will align the safety lever notch with a cross-pin in the frame. With your third hand hold a punch to this roll pin. With your *fourth hand* use a hammer to drive out the pin. Pull the slide all the way to the rear, lift it up at the rear end and move it forward off the barrel and frame. The slide retainer, firing pin and its spring can then be removed from the rear of the slide. Withdraw the recoil spring. Remove the grip panels. No further disassembly is recommended. After cleaning and lubrication,

Continued on page 74

Last month Tom Marks discussed how Thailand won its war against communist insurgents ("Thailand's Terror Years," August '90). This month he delves into the background of how the communists established a foothold in Thailand and the factors leading to their elimination as a militarily and politically potent force.

LEAVING the Philippines after a recent assignment for SOF, I purchased a book for the flight home. Written by a Catholic priest in Negros, one of the "hotter" areas in Manila's war against the Communists, it offered insight into the forces that led people to throw in their lot with insurgents and thereby attract certain retaliation from the system. It was an interesting read. Outrage dripped from the pages, much of it directed at the security forces, who, the author claimed, had committed a long list of crimes against his flock.

Still, it was not the alleged crimes that attracted my interest — the police and the constabulary probably were involved in most of the actions of which they stood accused. Rather, what was fascinating throughout the book was that as we met numerous peasants and worthy activists, all of whom had names and personalities, the security forces remained completely faceless. One relatively low-ranking officer, as I recall, had a name, but beyond that even he did not exist. It was as if half of an equation had been deleted.

With a few notable exceptions, it's been that way since the end of the Vietnam War. Analyses of insurgencies tend to focus upon two subjects: the causes of revolt and the insurgents themselves. If the security forces appear at all, they are normally cast in the role of brutes whose presence leads to more problems than solutions. Yet all theories of revolution recognize the security forces as a key element. How could it be otherwise? They are the shield which protects the government and its institutions.

As Americans we generally ask whether the government concerned is fighting for just ends, such as democracy and the good life. If it is, it deserves our support. Within our own society, of course, we are ourselves split between which of these matters most. Those labelled "conservatives" seem to place greater emphasis upon political rights, upon equality of opportunity, while those who are "liberals" seem to value equality of result. Using this latter criterion, a society that has *inequalities* of any sort is not legitimate and deserves any *rebellion* that arises against it. Hence, our Congress rushes to cut off aid to just about anyone. Being on "our side" and being less than perfect is sin enough.

Deployed against the insurgents, the security forces are caught between a rock

Thai troops from the First Military Region during "cleaning operations" at Thammasat University in Bangkok during 1976 putsch. Photo: Simonpietri/Syigma

SEEDS INSURG



OF ENCY

*Thailand's Young
Turks Slash
Communism's
Roots*

by Tom Marks



and a hard place. They must fight for an imperfect system by promising that "things will get better." Yet what do the security forces involved in such a campaign really think about these problems? How are they themselves affected by the business of counterinsurgency?

The author of the aforementioned book could never answer such questions, because his antagonists — he obviously placed in this category anyone who wore a uniform — remained unknown to him. They were not included in his flock. But included they must be if we are to understand the reality of the situation. For the answers will have a powerful impact upon whether reform will occur and thus end the insurgency.

A Kingdom Called Thailand

I have used this example because the Philippines is fresh in the minds of most American readers, and Thailand is not. Still, there was a time when Thailand, with its beautiful women, saffron-clad monks, fabulous palaces and temples, and hospitable people, was as commonplace a feature on our news pages as Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia. Many called it "the next Vietnam." Indeed, it was the western portion of the Indochina Theater, and the campaign ribbon awarded was the same no matter where in the theater you served. We trained and armed the Thai military, even as we had done with the Filipino; and we watched the Thai military's forays into politics even as we watch the Philippine episodes now. Finally, both were, and are, fighting communist insurgencies.

Thailand's insurgency has vanished from the press. It collapsed, became but an irritant, while in the Philippines the rebellion continues as a threat to the polity. The Thai military emerged as a victorious force, a bulwark in a stable society that was able to reform, to overcome its internal problems, and which now stands on the verge of joining the "developed" states of Asia. The Philippine military, in contrast, represents a system that has proved incapable of reform. It is a military that has become stigmatized as a threat to democracy in a society where administration is so ineffective that mandatory days-off from work are needed to cope with rolling power blackouts.

Similar features, but different outcomes. The reasons why are instructive. Pushed off the front pages it may be, but insurgency is the common element that has molded the Philippine and Thai armed forces. SOF has discussed the Philippine case in previous articles. Here, we shall look at Thailand. For it can tell us much about the issues raised above. In particular, the Thai illustration highlights the powerful impact the fight for reform can have on those called upon to carry it out.

Details of Thailand's successful counterinsurgency strategy were provided in "Thailand's Terror Years," in last month's SOF. The salient point made by General Saiyud Kerdphol, architect of the



CPM militiaman in Nan province carrying U.S.-made M60 machine gun. Irregular troops like this were instrumental in defeating the insurgency. Photo: Bangkok Post

kingdom's successful counterinsurgency, was simple: "It is the weakness of the system which allows guerrillas to grow. Therefore, you must attack those weaknesses, not the guerrillas themselves." Simple, true, but a radical concept to a military focused on other concerns. And for the Thai military, those concerns until recently had been overwhelmingly oriented on the maintenance of power.

When the absolute monarchy was overthrown in 1932 by a disgruntled coalition of civilian and military bureaucrats, the primary motivation was to remove the roadblocks on career advancement created by the royal princes' monopoly of upper positions. This done, though, it proved more difficult to actually administer the kingdom. Civilians were quickly brushed aside by the men with the guns, and four decades of virtually uninterrupted military rule commenced.

Hallmark of this rule was its relatively benign nature and its willingness to leave administration to the bureaucracy, so long as the leadership received its prerogatives and income. The latter was secured by establishing a marriage of convenience with the wealthy Chinese business community. To support the entire structure, key positions within the military were given to loyal followers, and a preponderance of

force was concentrated in Bangkok, the capital.

Thus it was that two militaries evolved: one, the upper echelon, was of suspect professional ability; the other, the lower rungs, both officer and enlisted, was more professionally sound, having of necessity to maintain the soldierly skills necessary to keep an armed force running. Obviously, the structural conditions existed for a split. What was needed was some catalyst to provoke a crisis. That catalyst was the insurgency.

Communism's roots in Thailand predate the 1932 coup. In fact, the soil for its germination can be found in the 19th century. Then, struggling to deal with the demands of British and French imperialism, several brilliant Thai kings, including Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, sought to ward off the Europeans by making Thailand "modern." Bangkok adopted Western ways, in particular the very bureaucracy that would later assault the absolute monarchy. Another change that was to have far-reaching consequences was the adoption of commercial agriculture. A vicious cycle of debt and alienation from the land resulted in growing landlessness, especially in the central plain heartland. The consequences were growing social and economic problems, even as the political system became more rigid and unable to accommodate demands for a voice in developments.

Nowhere were these demands made more urgent than in the northeast, Thailand's largest but poorest region. In the years after World War II, when the military was discredited due to its association with the Japanese, northeastern politicians established a reputation as an opposition group with leftist leanings. This led to their repression by the ruling powers. Arrests and assassinations, carried out over the next decade, ultimately drove underground those opposed to the system. There, they linked up with the CPT, which was dominated by Sino-Thai from Bangkok. To this structure were added two other local insurgencies, the north and the south, both fueled by parochial grievances. Overall control was exercised through the usual Leninist structure, with a Politburo and Central Committee at the apex.

It was growth of the conflict in Indochina that gave the communist movement the boost it needed to move beyond its regional origins. Chinese, Vietnamese, and Pathet Lao help steadily grew. By the early 1960s, hundreds of CPT cadre had been trained by those three sources and by 1965, when violence actually broke out, the CPT was a going concern.

Radicalization of the Army

With the benefit of hindsight, the fatal weaknesses of the CPT are apparent. As Saiyud has noted, "First, they were trained and oriented ideologically *outside* Thailand. Thus, they were never able to establish a real mass base. Second, conditions within Thailand changed,

economically and politically, but the CPT did not change accordingly. Third, that the CPT could not adjust had a great deal to do with the fact that it never really attracted intellectual support.”

This all seems clear after the fact. In the 1960s it was anything but obvious. Economic and political growth were to come later; and for a time it appeared the cream of the intellectual crop was going over to the communists. Externally kick-started though they were, the communists found grievances capable of sustaining them. That it was never able to penetrate the central plain, where conditions were seemingly most ripe, stemmed from cultural characteristics the CPT was never able to overcome. Yet it thrived in marginalized regions, such as the north, where it could address particular circumstances of poverty and injustice (in the case of the north, hill tribesmen who had been abused by the lowlanders made excellent recruits).

Thus it was that a serious law and order problem developed in certain areas of the kingdom. Naturally, the response was to commit the armed forces, especially the army. In any counterinsurgency, the linchpin is the battalion, either deployed as a whole or, as is more common, broken down into its companies, platoons, and squads. These levels are all commanded by relatively junior officers. In the Thai case, where class integrity is an important element in military — and even national — politics, fate dictated that the group to lead the struggle against the CPT would be the Thai Military Academy's Class 7 (1960; the seventh class under the West Point-style system as distinguished from the old curriculum).

What distinguished this group should be immediately apparent in their year of commission, 1960. It coincides with the intensification of the Vietnam War. Much in the same way the U.S. Military Academy at West Point class of 1959 produced a wealth of talent. So, too, did the Thai Class 7 breed more than its share of the best and brightest. To leap ahead for the sake of clarity, it was Class 7 that was to provide the heart of a not-so-secret body dedicated to military reform, the Young Military Officers Group — or, as they became known, the Young Turks. Growing from six members, it eventually included at least 18 battalion commanders. Their common element was continuous service in the field of stability operations.

The original six Class 7 members of the Young Turks are also noteworthy in sharing service with Thai forces in Vietnam. Interviews reveal the impact this experience had upon them, as did the earlier experience of many in the clandestine Thai effort in Laos — particularly when they returned to Thailand and realized that many of the same conditions which fed the communist insurgencies they had faced were present in their own country. In particular, we now



Soldier with M16 guards LZ. Teak tree behind him has communist propaganda carved into it. Photo: Bangkok Post

know, they were sensitive to the negative effects corruption and military politicization could have on the outcome of any struggle against insurgents. They vowed to do something about the situation, and the Young Turk movement formally came into being in 1973.

This was also the year that the Thai populace lost its patience with the flaws of its military leaders. A series of incidents involving student leaders led to a steady escalation of confrontation, and in October a brief explosion of civil unrest drove the three main rulers into exile. There followed three years of often chaotic parliamentary democracy, during which time even the most sacred of Thai institutions — “the Nation, the Monarchy, and Religion” — appeared threatened.

Because they had emerged as the most cohesive group within a military adrift in the aftermath of its fall from power, the Young Turks worked to foster professionalism. In particular, they wanted

an emphasis upon soldiering. It proved difficult to turn this orientation into reality, however, particularly when polarization on the political scene eventually led to mob violence in October 1976 and the reinstatement of military rule. Neither of these episodes involved direct Young Turk participation. They held their troops aloof. Yet such proved impossible a year later, when the military felt it necessary to again depose a civilian government, but this one a creature of its own making. A respected rightist had proved to be so rigid that societal polarization had only increased. Hence, he had to go. This time it was the Young Turks who planned and executed the coup.

They were, indeed, in a peculiar position. Highly sensitized to the situation in the countryside, to the need for societal reform, they sought a professional *military*. Yet they found themselves in the role of political arbiters. A compromise of sorts was the formation of a hybrid



Government checkpoint in Uttaradit province. Photo: Bangkok Post

parliamentary system, with a portion of the membership appointed by the king, the remainder elected. A Young Turk patron, General Kriangsak Chomanan, was backed by them as Prime Minister. Eventually, he, too, lost their backing and was forced to resign in March 1980 in favor of another Young Turk mentor, army commander Prem Tinsulanond.

"Papa" Prem, as he was known to the Young Turks, was to rule Thailand for the next eight years. During that period he was to oversee a remarkable transition. Parliament became a more elected body, the economy boomed, and the insurgency crumbled as a proper counterinsurgency strategy was implemented. Initially, though, Prem stumbled. His stand on several important issues raised Young Turk fears of corruption and power-mongering. Consequently, they rose against him on 1 April 1981.

There followed a game of political hardball, with Prem demonstrating he was as adroit at his new profession as he was on the battlefield. After initially being captured by his "children," he was able to escape to the palace. It now appears the Young Turks were forced to release him in response to a direct summons from the throne. Subsequently, the royal family accompanied Prem to a loyal base up-country, from which a counterstroke was prepared. This proved unnecessary, for the mere fact that the monarch had sided with the *government doomed* the coup to failure. It ignominiously collapsed.

Remarkably, throughout the entire episode, the Young Turks had kept in constant contact with Prem. Clearly they meant to chastise, not to harm. Regardless, in the aftermath, they were all cashiered from the army, ending a phase in the Thai army's reaction to insurgency. Still, their impact had been — and would continue to be — substantial, for they had shaken up the army establishment and pointed the way towards a new orientation for the military.

Impact on the Communists

The "April Fool's Coup," as it came to be known, had an important impact upon CPT strategic thinking. Dissidents within the CPT hierarchy argued vigorously that if the party had been ready, it could have

provoked a civil war between the two sides. This, in turn, would have brought foreign intervention, as the protagonists requested assistance. The result would have been chaos — with the party there to pick up the pieces. In April, however, the CPT's "rural areas surround the cities" doctrine meant it had no forces whatsoever in Bangkok. Consequently, it could only watch from the sidelines.

What the dissidents wanted was to scrap the Maoist strategic orientation in favor of one more relevant to Thai conditions. Rather than a simple rural/urban dichotomy, they pushed for "three strategic zones." The First Zone was to be Bangkok, the center of capitalist strength in the kingdom. There, the CPT would make use of the growing non-communist but "progressive" types to directly attack the system. The Second Zone was to be the rural areas where the majority of the



Colonel Chamnong Phiro, commander of CPM 43, looks at scale model of Thantao district camp. Photo: Bangkok Post

populace resided. Here, the struggle took the form mainly of covert political organizational work. Finally, in the Third Zone, the jungles, the CPT main forces were to remain based and ready for strikes to support the infrastructure in the Second Zone.

Within each zone, the dissident analysis continued, there were two "battle fronts," political and military. In order for the proper combination of the two to be reached, each zone needed to have an independent command headquarters for policy and tactical decisions. Each zone would have equal importance in the strategic plan, and their headquarters would not have to refer all questions to the central leadership. Instead, the central organs would issue only overall policy guidance.

Such a proposal would warm the heart of any lieutenant in the American Army. It's our way of doing business. But for the CPT

it was a dangerous splintering of authority. Battle was joined at the Fourth Party Congress, held in 1982. The dissidents demanded change, pointing out that the Maoist approach was appropriate for a huge country such as China where the focus of unrest was in the countryside and where space provided sanctuaries. Such was not the case in Thailand, where growing urbanization had shifted the political action to the cities — Bangkok, in particular — and where there were few places that the government could not reach with its forces. Looking at the crises that had shaken the system during the decade of the '70s, the dissidents observed, clearly pointed to the need for revision. China was no longer the model. Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua — the latter especially — were more appropriate to what was going on in the kingdom.

Stunned, the traditionalists fought back. A Sino-Thai elite had dominated the seven-man CPT Politburo since the earliest days of the party, and they could not envision alternatives to the sacred Maoist texts. In the Party Congress, they were able to turn back the dissidents by two votes (those casting ballots included Central Committee members and representatives from various districts, provinces and groups). The vote, however, only made matters worse, for the "rebels" as they were being termed, protested that it was rigged. Hence, a serious split appeared.

It was the beginning of the end for the CPT. Battered by the external events and the proper government counterinsurgency strategy, membership disillusionment was the final straw. A trickle of defections soon became a hemorrhage.

Too late, the CPT leadership offered a compromise. A position paper dated 3 July 1984 was circulated entitled "Four Strategic Zones and Five Battle Fronts." It adopted the dissidents' tripartite division of the conflict within Thailand itself, but to it was added a Fourth Zone — the

Some of the vast array of weapons and ordnance captured by government troops. Photo: Bangkok Post



international arena. The crucial role foreign activity and support could have on events within the revolutionary country itself were thereby recognized. Similarly, the concept of five battle fronts built upon the dissident proposal. To political and military spheres were added economic, cultural, and diplomatic. In particular the document recognized the need to pursue non-military approaches, such as subverting newspapers and important social groups. As a first step, a "Mass Organization Plan" concentrated on establishing links with the three key groups needed for the construction of a united front, farmers (peasants), labor and students.

Again, Nicaragua figured prominently in the CPT calculations. As outlined in "Coordination of Forces to Overthrow the Present Regime," the party needed to concoct a witches' brew involving four groups: legal political parties; the CPT itself with its own mass organization; the Thai People's Liberation Army (TPLA); and leading progressive elements within the Thai armed forces. By infiltrating legal political parties, the rationale went, the CPT would provoke a conflict between moderates and "right wing" parties. This would necessarily involve the progressive and "fascist" (right wing) factions within the military. Hence, either wittingly or unwittingly, the result would be cooperation of the CPT and the progressive military against the ruling class, with the TPLA able to tip the scales in favor of the former. This new approach, though it contained certain unrealistic elements, was clearly a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, it was too little, too late.

Military Transformation Complete

It was a merging of circumstances that destroyed the CPT dream of seizing power. CPT strategic mistakes and internal wrangling; the Sino-Vietnamese split that greatly reduced foreign assistance and led to expulsion from the Laotian sanctuaries; a Sino-Thai rapprochement; a correct government strategy for dealing with the insurgency — all were necessary, none sufficient in and of itself to win the war. But if any one of these factors is to be judged premier, it must be the shift in government strategy. Prem's fostering of democracy to address the popular search for political participation and social justice was a master stroke. It also, like the Young Turks, was a product of the insurgency.

For even as the Young Turks came into existence, another group, the Democratic Soldiers, formed. The difference was that the former came from the line, the latter was drawn from staff officers. The two groups were different in crucial ways. While the Young Turks sought to impose a knight's code on society and the military for the good of all, the Democratic Soldiers were more intimately involved in the business of counterinsurgency. In this they mirrored the French officer corps in Algeria.

Learning from communist defectors and



Thais saw usefulness of U.S. airmobile units in Vietnam and use Hueys to quickly deploy their infantry. Photo Sigma/Chauvel

their own study, the Democratic Soldiers advanced "democracy" — which they left quite undefined — as the key weapon against insurgency. Among their major supporters who played a key role in drafting Prem's now-famous Prime Ministerial Order No. 66/2523 (1980) were General Chaovalit Youngchaiyuth, later to be made head of the army by Prem and to oversee the destruction of the CPT, and MG Harn Leenanond, later to command the Fourth Army in the south and to destroy the CPT there, just as he had helped Prem do years before in the northeast. It is noteworthy that both of these were among the major figures who less than a year after the PM Order was issued, helped crush the Young Turks coup attempt.

Chaovalit graduated from the Thai Military Academy in Class 1 (1954). Regarded by most as nothing short of brilliant, he was also known as politically ambitious. This was to surface later, however. For the period at hand, the most important point was Chaovalit's redefining the army's role in the counterinsurgency. Put simply, if lack of "development" — in its all-encompassing socio-economic-political sense — was the cause of insurgency, then it was the army's task to lead that development.

Again, the echoes of the French in Algeria are loud. "National development" became the Thai rallying cry, and no facet was deemed beyond military purview. Though Prem himself for a time kept the reins of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) in his own hands, bureaucratic structure was such that in normal circumstances — as developed when Prem relinquished control — the army commander was also the ISOC boss. Through ISOC's charter which was to deal with the insurgency, Chaovalit had enormous power to reshape Thai society. The principal methodology adopted was mass mobilization.

This is a cardinal tool of counterinsurgency. The enemy seeks to mobilize the *populace*; the government engages in *countermobilization*. By playing upon this threat, ISOC and Chaovalit were able to rally a good segment of the people to the colors. Various militias mushroomed and eventually assumed the leading role in fighting the CPT. In addition to combat operations, their activities spanned the gamut from civic action to road building to agricultural advice. Simultaneously, a substantial psychological warfare effort

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UNSUNG WARRIORS

U.S. Coast Guard Fires Up Seaborne Narcos

by Robert MacKenzie & C. Denver Mullican



KNIFING through the water at 30 knots, the 110-ft. U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Cuttyhunk* bore down on its target, a rusty fishing boat in the Strait of Juan de Fuca off the western U.S./Canadian coast. Below decks two V-16 Oaxman Valenta diesel engines thundered, each generating 2880 horsepower. On the bridge, state-of-the-art radar and computers kept precise plots of not only the fishing boat, but up to 23 other targets simultaneously, displaying relevant data on the radar screen and other monitors. "Stand by to launch RHI [Rigid Hull Inflatable], boarding party to stations," coming over the cutter's PA system sent crewmen scurrying to their tasks.

As the cutter closed on the smaller vessel, identified through binoculars as the *F.V. Perwyn*, she reduced speed and began hailing by loudspeaker, giving the other captain a radio frequency to respond. Politely, Lieutenant Mark Ashley, captain of the *Cuttyhunk*, asked several questions and then announced his intention to put an inspection team aboard. Within minutes a two-man boarding party joined two crewmen in the RHI and sped across 200 meters of water separating the fishing boat from the cutter.

Equipped with body armor, Beretta 92S 9mm pistols, portable radios and a satchel of other necessary items, Petty Officers Souza and Luru were soon climbing over the rusty gunwale of the *Perwyn*. PO Spore and Seaman Johnson meanwhile maneuvered the RHI to keep the fishing boat between themselves and the cutter. Armed with an M16, the RHI crew had the ability to provide immediate support for the boarders if required.

Inspections

On board the fishing boat, the team from the *Cuttyhunk* began their inspection. Examining the boat's documents, they checked the log, fishing licenses, firearms permits, and crew records. A look into every compartment followed, with special attention paid to the possibility of false bulkheads and inaccessible spaces. Safety equipment and waste storage facilities, and the fish catch were scrutinized carefully. While all this was going on, Lt. Ashley radioed the name and registration number of the *Perwyn*, along with the names of the people aboard, to a shore station.

Much the same as a highway patrolman making a routine stop, within minutes the captain had a computer data bank on line,

reporting known information relevant to his request. A Coast Guard captain has access to the National Crime Center, state crime information centers, and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). EPIC maintains a maritime section with a comprehensive record of boarding histories and violations of vessels. In this case, the computer check revealed that the *Perwyn* was boarded eight months before and had been cited for a safety violation. Contacting his boarding party, Lt. Ashley ascertained that the previous violation had been rectified, and there were no new infractions of any sort. The entire procedure, from launch of the RHI to recall of the team, had taken 42 minutes.

In order to command a boarding party, a Coast Guard officer or NCO must be specifically qualified to do so. Obtaining the necessary qualifications involves training in a variety of applicable subjects such as maritime law, conduct of searches, public relations, and recognition of a wide variety of violations. The *Cuttyhunk* has three qualified boarding officers aboard, all with other duties on the cutter, but even taking turns they keep very busy. An average boarding lasts 45 minutes, larger



vessels take longer.

Law Enforcement

As law-enforcement officers, they are sometimes lent to the U.S. Navy when that service has need of trained people to board suspect vessels and make arrests. Foreign fishing vessels provide a challenge, since under international law the logkeeping regulations have blossomed and piles of detailed records are required. For example, in U.S. waters in recent years only U.S. vessels can actually do the trawling. Foreign vessels stand off and then purchase the rights to a particular line. As they draw the line up on their decks, a complete record of what is caught must be kept. The Coast Guard has a very broad legal mandate and does not need "probable cause" to stop and search a vessel. They *do* need a specific reason to search the personal effects of the crew.

The Cuttyhunk

My tour with the *Cuttyhunk* began at dawn. A winter sun was turning the tops of the snow-covered Olympic Mountains orange and red as I arrived at the USCG Station at Port Angeles, Washington. Port Angeles is a small town located on the northern shore of the Olympic Peninsula on

the Strait of Juan de Fuca separating the U.S. from Canada. It was cold, even for mid-February. The *Cuttyhunk* is the 22nd "Island Class" cutter to join the fleet, and is named for Cuttyhunk Island, the site of the first English settlement in New England. A proven British patrol boat design, she is 110 feet long with a 21 foot beam. Her steel hull draws 7 feet 3 inches and with a full load she displaces 155 tons.

I was greeted and given a tour by Lt. Brogan, the XO. A particularly interesting feature was the active-fin roll stabilizers, which minimize hull motion and help reduce crew fatigue. A cradle for the RHI and hydraulic crane took up much of the afterdeck, which was reinforced to mount depth charge launchers should the ship be employed in anti-submarine duties. Most of the time the *Cuttyhunk* traveled with its RHI suspended over the hull at deck level to be immediately available for action. Only at full speed or in bad weather was it left secured in the cradle. Forward, a 20mm cannon mount, empty for this local patrol, and ammo and lifejacket lockers occupied most of the deck. Two M60 machine guns just aft of the bridge completed the cutter's deck armament. The armory inside held

For routine patrol in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, *Cuttyhunk* deploys M60 machine guns and M16 rifles, has riot guns and M92S Beretta handguns in the locker. For serious work, she carries a 20mm Oerlikon, can fit depth-charge launchers if necessary. Photo: Robert MacKenzie

M16s, riot control shotguns, and 9mm pistols.

Most of the 16-man crew had been with the *Cuttyhunk* since she was launched a year and a half ago in New Orleans, and had sailed with her through the Panama Canal and up to Port Angeles, a trip vividly remembered for two hurricanes and general foul weather. *All of the crew* are active duty Coast Guard, and they range from a seaman just out of boot camp to "Boats," the Bosun's Mate, who has been on sea duty for 10 years. His uncle, a career Coast Guardsman, advised him not to get married and to join the Coast Guard. Boats said that he had complied with half of that advice and had a very understanding wife. Another crewman had been in the Air Force for six years before enlisting in the Coast Guard, and he has now found a home.

The *Cuttyhunk* and her sister ship *Orcas* are the two 100-foot cutters in Puget



Hello there, mind if I come aboard? Gunnery Mate 1st Class Michael Doyle of the *Chincoteague* as he appeared to the Cuban-crewed *Hermann*. Photo: George Wells, Jr.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS

The United States Coast Guard will be 200 years old on 4 August 1990. In 1790 Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton commissioned 10 "revenue cutters" to enforce our new country's tariff laws. At that time these "revenue cutters" were the only source of income for the federal government, but the IRS has sure changed that, and the Coast Guard has changed, too.

Today the Coast Guard, now a branch of the Department of Transportation, is an armed service with 38,000 people, serving on 250 cutters, (a cutter is any Coast Guard vessel over 65 feet long), 2,000 smaller boats, and a wide variety of planes and helicopters. The Coast Guard patrols our coasts and inland waterways, and enforces the law on the high seas. Lieutenant Mark Ashley, Commanding Officer of the USCGC *Cuttyhunk* with whom I spent a day in February cruising the waters of northern Puget Sound, told me that being in the Department of Transportation facilitates the conduct of some of the Coast Guard's duties. It is easier, he explained, to get cooperation from a Russian fishing vessel in the Bering Sea as an arm of the DoT, than as a part of the Department of Defense. Also, the DoD does not have power of arrest except in rare situations, while

the Coast Guard does as part of their normal duties.

Twelve thousand reserves supplement the ranks of the Coast Guard, bringing with them 9,000 vessels, 165 aircraft, and some 1200 radio stations. These reserves are an essential part of the Coast Guard, considering that the 38,000 regular Coast Guard personnel wouldn't even fill a modern football stadium and yet are responsible for the safety and defense of our entire coastline. Coast Guard units are usually under 50 men, and each man does many tasks. Certainly the crew of the *Cuttyhunk* were a tightly knit group: 16 men, including two officers, on a 110 foot vessel, performing maintenance as well as all communications, navigation, search and rescue, law enforcement and even household tasks.

Training

The Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut, provides the majority of the 5,000 member officer corps. Academy discipline and teaching resembles the other service academies, except there are only 800 students, so each receives a great deal of individual attention. Summers are spent aboard a three-masted, square-rigged sailing vessel, the *Eagle*, and by their senior year cadets serve as officers for the

summer cruises. Eighty-eight percent of Academy graduates remain in the Coast Guard after their mandatory five-year tour. Enlisted men and women are trained at the Coast Guard's basic training center at Cape May, New Jersey. It is a tough program, and 22% of arriving recruits don't finish the eight-week program. Most Coast Guard crewmen are high school graduates, 17 to 26 years old. Officer's Candidate School is a valuable opportunity, but a college degree is usually required, although outstanding NCOs are also admitted. Most enlist for four years, and the re-enlistment rate is very high.

Mission

The Coast Guard no longer collects tariffs, but now has many different missions. Maritime law enforcement is a major one, including the enforcement of smuggling and contraband laws, checking on compliance with marine safety regulations, and the enforcement of fishing and environmental laws, especially anti-pollution measures. A second major role is search and rescue, and these humanitarian missions are the reason why many join the Coast Guard. Coast Guard air and sea vessels are on constant alert for private planes or boats in trouble.

The *Cuttyhunk* for instance, main-



A cutter bearing down chills the heart of drug runners, but looks mighty good to the men on this capsized sailing cat. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard



Contraband cargoes of dope worth \$6.5 million a day are seized by the Coast Guard — here a boatload of marijuana. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard

Sound. In addition, the Coast Guard maintains the *Active*, a 210-foot open ocean vessel, and three 85-foot cutters in the area. In the summer the *Orcas* and the *Cuttyhunk* join the *Active* in open sea duty. In wintertime the weather is too rough for their presence to be productive — “unless you consider barfing productive” a crewman wryly commented. The *Cuttyhunk*'s normal cruising area is the San Juan Islands in northern Puget Sound.

A Day In The Life Of The *Cuttyhunk*

We got underway at 0830. Ear protectors are required in the engine room when both of the V-16s are fired up, and even then you can hear and feel the roar. Our first action after clearing port was a foul weather drill, simulating only 50 yards visibility, not an uncommon occurrence in this foggy strait.

tains a separate radio tuned to the ELT (Emergency Locating Transmitter) frequency of aircraft in case a plane should go down anywhere in Puget Sound. Anywhere from 70,000 to 170,000 people each year are assisted to safety by the Coast Guard. As a comparison of expense to return, Coast Guard search and rescue efforts save more than three times the service's annual budget in recovered property value every year. In addition, the Coast Guard maintains U.S. aids to navigation, like buoys and lighthouses, and stands ready to perform mercy missions such as transporting injured crewmen from a ship to a shore hospital. In especially busy harbors — San Francisco, New Orleans, Houston and Seattle — the Coast Guard maintains a traffic-control center, monitoring commercial ships on radar and closed-circuit TV. The Coast Guard also helps with oil spills, controls the navigational aspects of bridges, licenses and tests commercial sailors, and does ice-breaking in the Great Lakes, northeastern ports, and the Arctic.

Finally, the Coast Guard assists the military when called to do so. During World Wars I and II the Coast Guard was absorbed into the Navy, and they have served in every conflict involving

the U.S., including the War of 1812, the Civil War, Vietnam and Grenada. Today, the Coast Guard has primary responsibility for defense of the U.S. coastline, in an integrated Coast Guard-Navy plan assigning Maritime Defense Zones.

On the bright blue island-dotted waters of the Caribbean, the U.S. Coast Guard maintains a constant, three-tiered defense. Untold tons of illegal drugs are smuggled through myriad waterways and across open expanses of sea to end up on the streets of American cities. The Coast Guard mans the point in our fight against the Caribbean narcotics trade. Larger cutters, 210 and 378 footers, form the first line. They carry out three-and four-week patrols in the natural “choke points” of the Caribbean, narrow passages between the islands. Mother ships carrying big loads have to transit these passages to approach the U.S. coast. The second line is made of 95-foot patrol boats and the new 110-foot island-class cutters like the *Cuttyhunk*. Cruising 200 miles offshore, their job is to control the area where mother ships traditionally offload onto smaller, faster vessels. On the third line, 18-to 41-foot boats work out of coastal stations, trying to intercept the

fast boats coming in.

Good intelligence is critical, and the Coast Guard follows leads from other federal and local agencies as well as using its own sources. The amount of boat traffic in the Caribbean is mind-boggling, and searching every vessel that approaches our coast line is impossible. The Coast Guard uses tips, intelligence and experience to position its large cutters in the “choke points,” and to guide the 95-foot patrol boats. These boats have a particularly difficult task, since they must plot their courses precisely to intercept targets that are usually faster than they are.

Teamwork

Inter-agency cooperation is essential. In a typical operation, a 41 foot Coast Guard boat was patrolling offshore near *Ft. Lauderdale* when it got a call from a sheriff's helicopter. The chopper reported a large boat nestled together with two smaller fast boats, and provided a map reference, and the Coast Guard sped off to make an interception. The fast boats headed in opposite directions as soon as they saw the Coast Guard bearing down. Pursuing one of them, the 41 footer gradually fell behind. Fast as the smuggler was, however, it could not outrun the helicopter, which organized a reception



Druggies can run, but they can't hide. Here USCG chopper and boat close on a suspect vessel. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard

TWO HUNDRED YEARS

party on the beach. The patrol boat arrived in time to see two would-be drug runners being led, handcuffed, to a sheriff's car. The Coast Guard took \$145,000 in cash and the boat into custody. In another typical case, a Drug Enforcement Agency plane spotted a possible mother ship and, through a volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary radioman, contacted the nearest Coast Guard vessel which then made a successful bust.

By constant vigilance and hard work, the Coast Guard makes drug smuggling risky and costly. Averaging nearly 200 drug boat seizures a year, over 800 arrests are made, with about 2½ million pounds of illegal drugs seized. It is a Herculean task, however. The Coast Guard estimates that they can act on 30% of good intelligence leads at choke points, and two of three in the off-loading zone. And, of course, there are thousands of boats and planes they don't know about, plus the complexities of international relations and the perfidy of some foreign countries also add to the Coast Guard's difficulties.

A Typical Day

1989 was just an ordinary year for the Coast Guard. However, an ordinary year for the Coast Guard encompasses

an extraordinary number of events. On an average day the men and women of the Coast Guard accomplish an incredible amount.

For example, they save one life every 91 minutes — 16 every day. In addition, another 361 people are assisted to safety and \$2,476,712 in property is saved. An average of 183 search and rescue cases are completed every day.

Drug interdiction takes up a large chunk of that day. On average, 80,273 pounds of marijuana or cocaine are seized, and inter-agency cooperation accounts for another 243 pounds of marijuana and 26 pounds of cocaine. The drugs seized daily by the Coast Guard alone have a street value of \$6.5 million or \$4,200 confiscated every minute, along with 23 smugglers. A drug-running vessel is seized and impounded every other day.

Marine safety measures are another large component of the Coast Guard's 24-hour activities. Coast Guard marine safety personnel work 35 hazardous chemical spills. In addition, they board or inspect 91 vessels for safety, environmental, and fishing checks. They investigate 35 marine casualties and more than 8,100 transactions take

place on the Coast Guard's sophisticated Marine Safety Information System, the largest system of its kind in the world.

It costs the Coast Guard \$5 million a day to keep all of their boats, cutters and planes running. Fuel alone accounts for \$167,000 of that, enough to buy 146,491 gallons of 87-octane unleaded gasoline. And it takes the daily vigilance of the Coast Guard's personnel, both military and civilian, to respond to accidents at sea, to keep channels and ports safely marked and managed, to prevent drugs and other contraband from flooding into our country, and to ensure compliance with our strict environmental and marine safety laws. By any standard, that \$5 million a day is money well spent.

From 10 "revenue cutters," the Coast Guard has grown to be a fully equipped and trained armed service 38,000 strong with thousands of planes and vessels. Unlike the military, which trains endlessly for missions unlikely to occur, the Coast Guard is on duty day and night performing its assigned active duty role.

— Robert MacKenzie

Lt. Ashley set a speed of 9.7 knots and every three minutes took a radar triangulation fix, then charted a course and position. Lookouts on the open bridge and in the bow constantly scanned the water for hazards. Port Angeles is a logging town, and huge water-soaked logs present a serious danger in the Sound, especially "deadheads" — logs floating vertically with only the small end visible in the water. Since a propeller costs \$25,000, and a ruptured hull a lot more, vigilance is required.

At 0900 we approached our first subject, a fishing vessel spotted on radar. During the day we boarded three vessels and in each boarding the same courtesy and professionalism was shown. First routine questions are asked: *Where are you from, where are you bound? How many on board? How many and what type of weapons? When were you last boarded?* The same boat is not boarded more frequently than every 60 days unless violations are noted. When there are violations of any law or regulation, the usual action by the Coast Guard is to notify their Hearing Officer in California. The Hearing Officer then sends a notice of violation to the boat owner and he is given an opportunity to respond. Then penalties are assessed, some of them quite hefty — for example \$350 for improper sewage disposal. Of course a boat carrying illegal drugs would immediately be seized and its crew arrested.

A huge Hyundai container-ship lumbered by on the horizon and Lt. Ashley commented that the Coast Guard does not board such large freighters as they are under the jurisdiction of U.S. Customs. Customs, unfortunately, is only able to search 3% of all incoming containers. Lt. Ashley remarked with some frustration that 97% of the containers go unchecked, and speculated that large quantities of drugs may enter the country that way. I asked him about the quality of intelligence leading to such checks, and about inter-agency information sharing. He commented that securing good intelligence was always a problem, but that cooperation was increasing. The proximity of the Canadian border was another frustration for him. The border runs down the middle of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Coast Guard cannot pursue suspects into foreign waters. If the bad guys dodge across the line, they are safe.

At 1030 hours we rendezvoused with the *Orcas*. Lt. Ashley granted the *Orcas* permission to tie up at his dock for the day so she could pump tanks and attend to chores. The cutters are able to spend about one week at sea, limited by sewage storage and fuel capacity. The *Cuttyhunk* burns 304 gallons of diesel an hour at full speed, and 26 gallons at idle, so she spends most of her patrol at a modest 12 knots.

Our next boarding went smoothly and afterwards we went below for lunch. With all the fresh air and calm seas I was happy



Cuttyhunk carries rigid-hull inflatable ready to launch for emergency rescues, inspection boardings and the like. Here crew prepares to launch for inspection of fishing vessel. Photo: Robert MacKenzie

to see beef stew, rice and Waldorf salad — even ship-made shortcake, strawberries and whipped cream for dessert. Over chow I asked Lt. Ashley whether he had any major complaints about the Coast Guard, and he answered that he had none at all. The crew members are well-motivated, they are kept busy with a variety of active missions, and recruitment is not a problem. My observations on the *Cuttyhunk* confirmed this. The men and the officers had an excellent working relationship and there seemed to be little or no friction even in the necessarily close quarters of the cutter.

As I swallowed the last of my strawberries my eye was drawn to a video playing on the mess VCR. Lt. Ashley told me it was a movie taken of training exercises on the coast. A common duty in a guardsman's career, the exercise involved maneuvering in the most incredibly heavy surf, station keeping, and simulated rescues.

In an environment of raging, frigid, wild water, with the depth changing instantly from 6 feet to 30, the Coast Guard practices the essential skills used in real-life rescues. During the exercises on the video, a surf boat was hit so hard by a huge wave that its windshield was shattered, and the boat nearly capsized. And that was with the

crew doing everything right.

About 1300 we headed back for Port Angeles. Lt. Ashley decided to take the *Cuttyhunk* back at full speed. He opened the throttle and the boat surged forward in the water. We reached 30 knots in minutes and the shoreline and other boats flashed by. Twin rooster tails threw enough wake to surf on behind us and the bow wake foamed and hissed several feet up the hull. Despite the size of the *Cuttyhunk*, the ride was smooth and seemed effortless. Lt. Ashley allowed as how they had surprised the odd pleasure boat which tried to outrun the cutter. We were back at the dock by 1400.

The *Cuttyhunk* had to go back north to the San Juan Islands by nightfall, and that trip took a couple of hours. Leaving the cutter by RHI, I was soon back at the dock watching the cutter stand out to sea, headed for its patrol area. I was completely impressed with the professionalism, efficiency and courtesy of the *Cuttyhunk's* crew. They certainly embody the Coast Guard motto: "An Eagerness to Serve."

Robert MacKenzie is SOF Contributing Editor for *Unconventional Operations*

C. Denver Mullican is a Louisiana-based freelance writer.

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NAVY SEAL



Trying to Keep Hollywood Honest

by Dan Gagliasso

Photos by Bob Marshak/Orion

Last month we looked at the film "Flight of the Intruder" and this month SOF talks with Chuck Pfarrer who wrote the soon to be released feature film "Navy SEAL." It's not that we prefer Hollywood gloss to the real thing. Films like these shape the image of American veterans and determine how John Q. Public sees us, and SOF stands watch so if Tinseltown strays too far from the

facts — as in the case of "Born on the Fourth of July" or "Casualties of War" — we can put the word out and hopefully hit them where it hurts — in their wallets.

S**OLDIER** of Fortune readers may have noticed that the film industry has been cranking out war movies at a healthy clip the last few years. Combine

this with the fact that bullshit reigns supreme in the city of tinsel, and you have the ingredients for silver screen disasters.

Still there are a few individuals working on war films who are the real thing, and it shows in the movies they're involved with. For example former SOF editor and former Marine Captain Dale Dye has done very well for himself as



Movie SEALs charge during helicopter assault in Beirut.



Charlie Sheen carries wounded comrade from line of fire.



both a tech adviser and actor. Novelist/screen writer Kent Anderson, *Sympathy for the Devil*, was a member of the 5th Special Forces late in the Vietnam War. Tech adviser/writer Jim Monaghan was also a Special Forces trooper. And currently there's a former Navy SEAL lieutenant who is making a pretty big splash as a screenwriter with a film loosely based on some of his experiences

with the Navy's elite. The film is "Navy SEAL" and the screenwriter is Chuck Pfarrer.

In 1980 Chuck Pfarrer was a newly admitted graduate student in psychology at California State University Northridge. As he walked the halls of the university realizing he'd be spending his twenties there, he came to a decision. He hot-footed it down to the closest Navy

recruiting office and signed up for the SEALs.

"The psychology department was happy to see me go. Anyone who would sign up for Navy SEAL duty wasn't their type of individual anyway," Pfarrer remembers with a grin. Pfarrer is a wry and funny, 6'2", red-headed Irishman who laughs easily and isn't afraid to speak his mind.

His father was a destroyer captain and even did a stint assigned to MACV in Vietnam. His brother is a Merchant Marine officer. Basically, he was raised as a Navy brat from Pearl Harbor to Mississippi.

Pfarrer first did his bit with Navy OCS (Officer Candidate School) in Newport, Rhode Island, before shipping out for SEAL training at the Naval Amphibious Base at Coronado, California. SEAL training is considered by many special ops types to be second to none for physical and mental toughness. Up to 80% of each class usually drops out during the rigorous 26-week course.

Pfarrer said a quick look at the carriers and destroyers heading out to sea for six-month West Pac cruises was one thing that helped keep him going. "No way I was going to ring that bell, hand in my Budweiser and go be Popeye the sailorman for six months at a time," he told me.

All it takes to quit the SEAL program is to walk up to the camp bell and ring it three times — no excuses, no reasons. Instructors are often fond of taking jabs at their Army counterparts, especially during underwater demolition and combat swimming training. Pfarrer said a common statement made to SEAL recruits by their trainers was, "Maybe you ought to consider the Green Berets, they don't have to do this kind of shit."

Pfarrer's 26 weeks of training included hyperbaric medicine, cartography, beach surveys, jungle warfare, underwater demolition, underwater attacks on ships and nighttime two mile underwater swims to landing or pick-up zones. After six days of constant physical harassment with virtually no sleep, traditionally called Hell Week, training finally concluded with three weeks of airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia.

"If they teach you anything, it's not to quit. Cheat if you must, in fact they encourage it in a way, but don't get caught. Don't ever get caught," Pfarrer laughs.

After jump school at Benning, Pfarrer was assigned to UDT Team 11 and SEAL Team 4. Out of 122 prospective SEALs who started the program only 22 survived to be assigned to SEAL units. Pfarrer's unit had been specially trained in jungle warfare. So in 1983, the military being what it is, naturally his team was assigned to the urban warfare capital of the world, Beirut.

"First Team met us on the beach in speedos with beers in their hands," he said. And being an avid surfer since his teens, Pfarrer couldn't miss a chance for some "Apocalypse Now" hijinks. He had smuggled his surfboard on their transport, a Sea Stallion chopper, using a body bag to disguise it. He's probably the only surfer ever to have surfed the causeway at Green Beach, Beirut, which he understandably described as the world's most dangerous beach break.

His memories of Beirut are both funny and tragic. Many of the 250-odd Marines who died in the barracks bombing were

acquaintances. Pfarrer and other SEALs often ate at the Marine mess hall. Once the chow truck that used to deliver food to Green Beach was blown up before the SEALs could even get their breakfast. Pfarrer, ever the resourceful SEAL, took his .357 Magnum and started shooting stingrays to help feed the rest of the Americans on the beach. "It tastes kind of like scallops," he insists.



Don't try this at home. SEAL makes forced entry into terrorist residence in Beirut.

"We used to get dressed up in indigent rags and go to the Italian sector to buy beer with our AKs slung on our shoulders." Pfarrer and his cronies would trade the beer for steaks which they then traded for that hard-to-get delicacy, pineapple juice. It was in Beirut that Chuck started writing. First there was a screenplay written in spiral notebooks about his experiences in Beirut, then a film script loosely based on the World War II exploits of Ernest Hemingway called "Crook Factory." That script eventually sold, but Pfarrer had more important things on his mind while in Beirut.

He and his team carried out numerous rescue missions, patrolled the beaches and anchorages, and carried out search and rescue operations. That doesn't include the missions that he can't talk about. He later did stints in Puerto Rico and Honduras, and finally wrapped up his SEAL career with a classified mission that he can't talk about but considers to be the pinnacle of his service in Navy special operations.

In fact, his writing of a film on the SEALs was not something he went at lightly. His agent finally convinced him that it would be better if Chuck did it than someone else. He's done his best not to trivialize the men he left behind and what they do. Pfarrer looks at "Navy SEAL" as kind of a modern version of "Guns of

Navarone," except with Stinger missiles instead of heavy artillery. Still it's something he thought out very well. "I really didn't want to trade on the SEAL name but the SEAL community has been supportive. They love seeing guys make it on the outside."

And make it Chuck has. He has sold seven screenplays since entering the topsyturvy world of screenwriting. All involve action adventure themes in one way or another. Another of Chuck's films will be released this summer. "Darkman" is kind of a beauty and the beast with cops and a scientist. He is also trying to develop a screenplay about an Australian journalist who uncovers a Viet Cong atrocity during the Vietnam War.

Pfarrer carefully picks his words when asked about the present state of the SEALs. SOF readers may remember that both in Grenada and Panama, SEAL Team members suffered unusually high casualty rates considering the small numbers of men involved. "When there is a successful special op you don't hear about it and you shouldn't. Yet the press always picks up on any perceived failures."

Pfarrer points out that most journalists know little or nothing of how special ops are carried out, and are the last people qualified to judge elite units' successes or failures. "You really know you've made it in the SEAL community when you go to a party and someone says, 'I thought you were dead,'" Pfarrer laughs.

Still he has his fantasies of how he'd like to help his buddies who still serve on SEAL teams. It seems that because of cutbacks authorized by Congress SEALs can only collect two or three hazardous duty-type pays regardless of whether they are performing all three of these duties or not. "I'd like to get a congressman out on the open tail of a C-141 and give him his 'chute and one hundred dollars and tell him, 'OK, fat boy, you jump.'"

One more thing really irks Pfarrer — the phonies who try to pass themselves off as former SEALs. Actor Jessie Ventura, "Predator," really did serve in the unit. But it's a very small community and Chuck points out that it only takes a phone call to get someone's background checked, or lack of it.

"I wouldn't go into a biker bar in Pacoima and claim to be a Hell's Angel." Yet every once in a while some wannabe shows up at the bar where the SEALs hang-out in Coronado and flashes one of those fake I.D. cards claiming SEAL lineage. "I love those guys, I like to put my arm around them and whisper that they're going to have to keep buying me beers until I fall down or I'll throw them to the sharks," Pfarrer laughs. SEAL sharks, no doubt.

Dan Gagliasso rode bulls on the rodeo circuit before becoming a screenwriter and last penned the behind-the-scenes look at "Flight of the Intruder" in last month's issue of SOF. ✎

PURPLE HEARTS AND SHOOTING STARS

Celebrity/Vet Trap Shoot Attracts the Best

Text & Photos by Dan Gagliasso

WHAT happens when a veteran has been crippled or paralyzed for life? If we watch or read *Born on the Fourth of July* we might think that they all wallow in self-pity and blame everyone else for their troubles until they reach a point of self-realization.

Well, that's not always the way it is as demonstrated by the California Paralyzed Veterans Association (CPVA) during their annual Celebrity Trap Shoot held this past April. The CPVA has been in existence since 1946 and is wholly supported by donations and fund raisers. Its primary goal is to encourage disabled veterans to live as independent a life as possible, and in line with that philosophy the CPVA receives no government assistance.

This year's celebrity co-chairmen of the trap shoot were Academy Award nominated screenwriter John Milius and former "Untouchable" and Olympic trap shooter, actor Robert Stack. In fact, Milius, a mean hand with a shotgun, won last year's non-PVA shooter award and was heard to say, "Nobody out here knows they're disabled and they're just kicking our butts."

The PVA members shooting were something to watch. Jim DeKay of Wisconsin topped the list with a two-day total of 192 out of 200. The top team was Roy Rogers, Jr., Ben Wilson, Darrel Von, Ron Zumwalt and Jack Segal, with a team score of 397 out of 500. Each team consisted of celebrities and PVA shooters. Not only was Roy Rogers, Jr., there, but king of the cowboys Roy Rogers, Sr., was also competing in trap shooting events.

Everywhere you turned both disabled veterans and Hollywood-types were turning in high scores and generally having a great time. No pretenses and little grandstanding, just a group of people with similar interests, some of whom just happen to be disabled and others who are known for recreating fantasies on your television and movie screens.



TOP: Celebrity shooters on the firing line. Well known writer/director John Milius, in red coat, taking aim.

CENTER: Left to right: Richard Johnson, Larry Everett, Robert Block, Dan Pierson and Bob Wellman enjoy photo opportunity.

ABOVE: Shotguns rest against California Paralyzed Veterans Association banner. You can reach the organization at (213) 494-5713.

Twenty-two teams of five members each went onto the field mixing celebrities, VIPs, wheelchair shooters and occasional neophytes. Other celebrities shooting included Marty Kove of "Cagney and Lacy"; Ann Lockheart and husband Adam Taylor; Marshall Teague of "Next of Kin"; Frank McRae of "Red Dawn"; Reb Brown of "Captain America" fame; former Miss Missouri Sally Hampton; novelist Jessie Hill Ford, who wrote "The Raider"; writer Kent Anderson, "Sympathy for the Devil"; and almost 40 others.

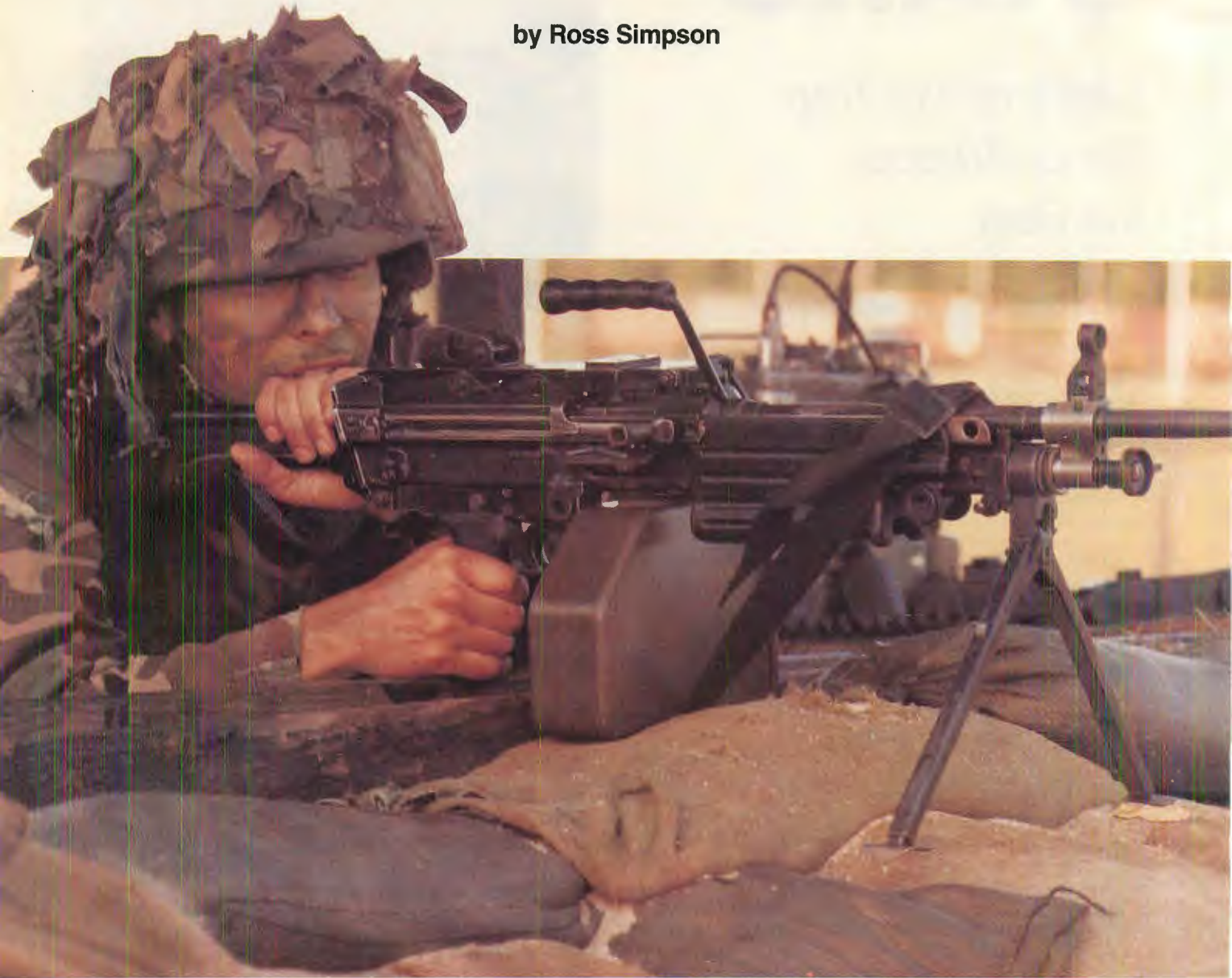
After the first two rounds were fired at the 16-yard line, shooters were handicapped into three divisions shooting from varying distances for the last two rounds. "A" Division shooters fired from

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HEROES OF PANAMA

Conspicuous Gallantry for Just Cause

by Ross Simpson



U.S. soldier with M249 SAW mans sandbagged position as Operation Just Cause was winding down. Photo: Ross Simpson

THE citation says it all: "Corporal Ivan D. Perez, Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) is awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry in the face of hostile action on 20 December 1989 in Panama City, Panama."

Perez, a 22-year-old soldier from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was the first of 23 American soldiers killed in the brief, but bloody invasion of Panama that destroyed the regime of Manuel Noriega.

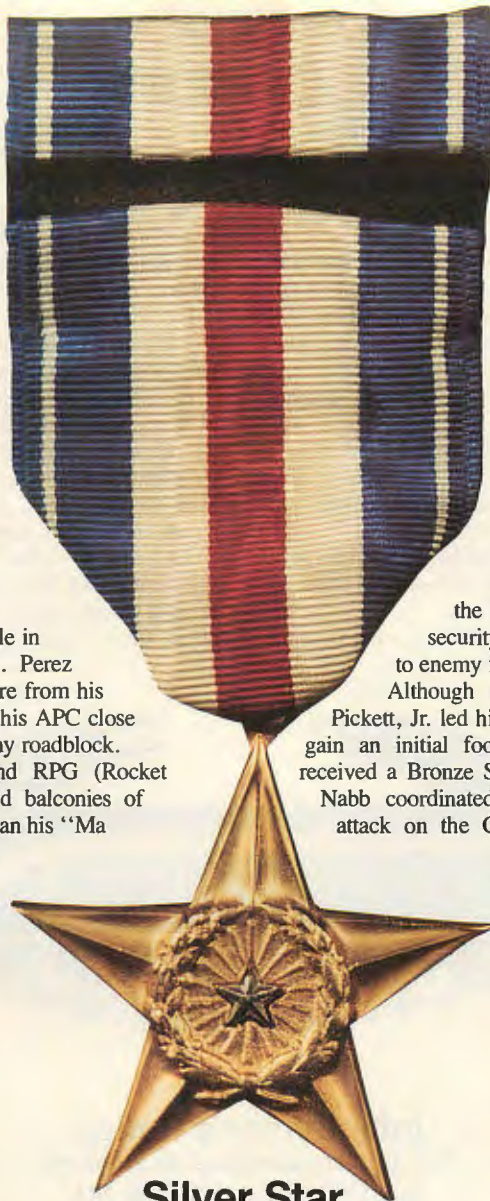
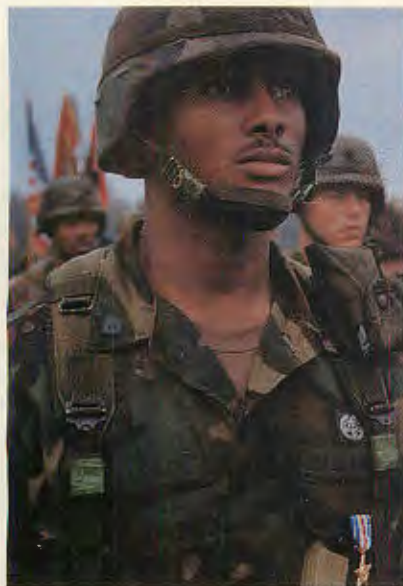
When Task Force Bayonet began its nighttime assault on General Noriega's headquarters in Panama City in the early morning hours of 20 December, soldiers loyal to the Panamanian dictator were waiting behind sandbags and roadblocks for Perez and his buddies. Somehow, they knew the Americans were coming.

As track commander of the second vehicle in the lead platoon of Bravo Company, Cpl. Perez provided accurate and deadly suppressive fire from his .50 caliber machine gun as he maneuvered his APC close to the lead squad so it could reduce an enemy roadblock.

Despite intense small arms, sniper and RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) fire from rooftops and balconies of surrounding buildings, Perez continued to man his "Ma Deuce" without regard for his personal safety.

At one point in the assault, it seemed as though every enemy gun was pointed at Perez. "Had it not been for Cpl. Perez's actions, the enemy obstacle could not have been rapidly reduced, and the momentum of the attack would surely have been lost," concludes the citation which was presented to the parents of Ivan Perez.

In addition to the Silver Star awarded posthumously to Cpl. Perez, a medic from Delta Company was also awarded the nation's third highest award for valor. Specialist Roderick B. Ringstaff distinguished himself by administering first aid to wounded comrades despite serious wounds to his arm and leg. Even as he neared exhaustion from loss of blood,



Silver Star
For gallantry in action not sufficient to warrant the Medal of Honor or Distinguished Service Cross. Nation's third highest award for valor.

Specialist Roderick B. Ringstaff repeatedly pulled wounded comrades to safety and provided medical attention until he collapsed of his own wounds.

Corporal Ivan D. Perez manned .50 cal in view of PDF troops manning a roadblock near the Commandancia without regard for his own safety.

Ringstaff dragged a severely wounded soldier to a medical evacuation vehicle.

Although Ringstaff physically collapsed at this point due to his wounds, he continued to provide words of encouragement and moral support to other soldiers in D Co., most of whom were less seriously wounded than himself.

Bravery was commonplace at the PDF's HQ — the *Commandancia*. When one soldier went down, another took his place. After Cpl. Perez slumped behind his machine gun, Specialist Charles E. Berry, a rifleman in B Co., replaced his mortally wounded track commander and kept the .50 firing. Berry was awarded the Bronze Star for providing suppressive fire against the enemy.

Specialist Paul D. Gibson, another member of Bravo Company was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor for leaving the security of his tracked vehicle and exposing himself to enemy fire as he cleared a path for his unit.

Although severely wounded, Sergeant Matthew L. Pickett, Jr. led his men in D Co. through enemy obstacles to gain an initial foothold at the Commandancia. Pickett also received a Bronze Star with V device. First Lieutenant Robert Nabb coordinated effective supporting fire throughout the attack on the Commandancia and he and his men were continually under heavy fire from the PDF defenders. His efforts earned Lt. Nabb a Bronze Star with V.

In addition to the two Silver Stars and six Bronze Stars with V device, a Bronze Star was awarded to Private Tony W. Castleberry for using his body to shield a wounded M60 gunner in his track.

Second Lieutenant Douglas Rubin who commanded the lead platoon of D Co. leading the assault on Noriega's lair at the Commandancia was one of the Bronze Star with Valor recipients; Lt. Rubin also refused aid until his wounded men were evacuated.

When General Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, toured the burned-out ruins of the Commandancia a week after the assault, the commander of the 4th Battalion allowed Rubin to brief



their "boss" on the operation.

"Sir," said the young lieutenant as he snapped to attention in front of the four star general, "as soon as we crested the hill near the headquarters, the PDF (Panama Defense Forces, who were manning roadblocks and sandbagged positions around the Commandancia) began spraying us with a heavy volume of automatic weapons and RPG fire."

Being the lead mechanized platoon, it was Rubin's assignment to take out enemy obstacles: wire, trucks, cars and cement roadblocks. To bust through the roadblocks, Rubin heavily sandbagged the lead tracks and sent them flying down the narrow streets with guns blazing."

"Two of my tracks were hit by RPGs," said Rubin, "flaming one of them." An RPG that hit the track Cpl. Perez was commanding failed to explode. Rubin thinks it was fired at such close range, it didn't have time to arm itself. Still, the burning APC held up the platoon's advance for about 30 minutes as ammunition inside the M113 "cooked off."

The delay gave Lt. Rubin time to bring up an M551 Sheridan light tank and a Marine Corps Light Armored Vehicle to provide covering fire so he could evacuate 18 WIAs and 2 KIAs.

In addition to two APCs that were hit by RPGs, another armored personnel carrier was disabled by mortar fire, and a fourth track was abandoned after its fuel line ruptured.

Private 2 Louis G.

Miller III was awarded the Bronze Star with V device for "zig-zagging" through a hailstorm of 40mm grenades and machine gun fire

to back the abandoned APC

out of the field of fire. Its fuel line was later repaired and the track's .50 caliber put back in action.

"The kid's another Audie Murphy," said Miller's First Sergeant who recommended the 18-year-old infantryman for the Army's fourth highest decoration.

"All you were thinking about was saving yourself and your buddies, and taking those motherfuckers out, and that's what we did," said Miller, a modest young man from Cogan Station, Pennsylvania.

In addition to the eight awards for extraordinary valor, 14 Army Commenda-

tion Medals with V device and 36 Purple Hearts were awarded to troopers from the 4th Battalion, a testament to the ferocity of the fighting at Noriega's headquarters. An estimated 400 PDF soldiers, many of whom wore civilian clothes, defended the 15 buildings of the Commandancia.

By first light, the heaviest fighting was over. By 1100, C Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne Infantry, and a Ranger Company attached to Task Force Bayonet cleared the Commandancia and other buildings within the PDF headquarters.

By 1700 on 20 December the Commandancia was secure. Some sporadic sniper fire and fighting occurred during the next two days, but Operation Just Cause was essentially a one-day battle.

It's clear to the men who attacked the Commandancia that the PDF was waiting for them, but Lieutenant General Carl W. Stiner, the operational commander, can only speculate on who tipped off the PDF. There are three possibilities: a call from someone at the State Department, a radio broadcast from Cuba, or U.S. news reports on troop movements.

As for the so-called "leak" at the State Department, Gen. Stiner says he was told that someone called a close friend of Noriega at the Panama Canal Commission and told him to make sure his kids were off the street, "because tonight is the night."

The National Security Agency monitored what Gen.

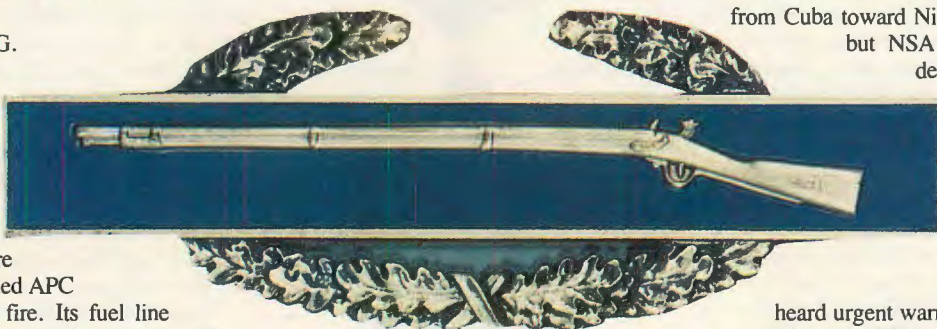
Stiner described as a "burst broadcast" beamed from Cuba toward Nicaragua and Panama, but NSA has been unable to determine if the Cuban message was a tip-off.

While in Panama on the eve of the invasion briefing his unit commanders on the operation, Gen. Stiner

heard urgent warnings being broadcast at 2200 on PDF radio channels that "they're coming," and "the ball game is at 1 a.m." The warnings instructed Panama Defense Forces to report to their units and draw weapons, because the Americans were coming by "air, sea or land."

Although vague about the alleged security leak at the State Department, Stiner said he knows for a fact that security was breached, "and it added to U.S. combat deaths and injuries."

H-hour for the invasion of Panama was scheduled for 0100 on 20 December, but



Combat Infantryman's Badge
For soldiers assigned or attached to an infantry unit during any period such unit was engaged in active ground combat. Battle participation credit alone is not sufficient, recipient must have been in actual combat with the enemy.



First Lieutenant Douglas Rubin maneuvered his platoon to gain an early foothold in the Commandancia and fought on even after being wounded.



Sergeant Matthew L. Pickett, Jr. continued advancing through enemy obstacles at the Commandancia even after being severely wounded.

Photo: Judith Meeks

Stiner moved up H-hour for in-country assault forces by 15 minutes when he felt the operation had been compromised. Unfortunately, there was nothing to do to move up the "drop time" of 4,000 Army paratroopers, Rangers and Green Berets who were inbound from four CONUS (Continental United States) bases. They had to jump into heavy ground fire at Tocumen and Rio Hato, two military airfields where elite PDF units were stationed.

Rangers jumped into a hornets nest at Rio Hato, 90 miles southwest of Panama City, where the PDF's Officer and NCO schools were located.

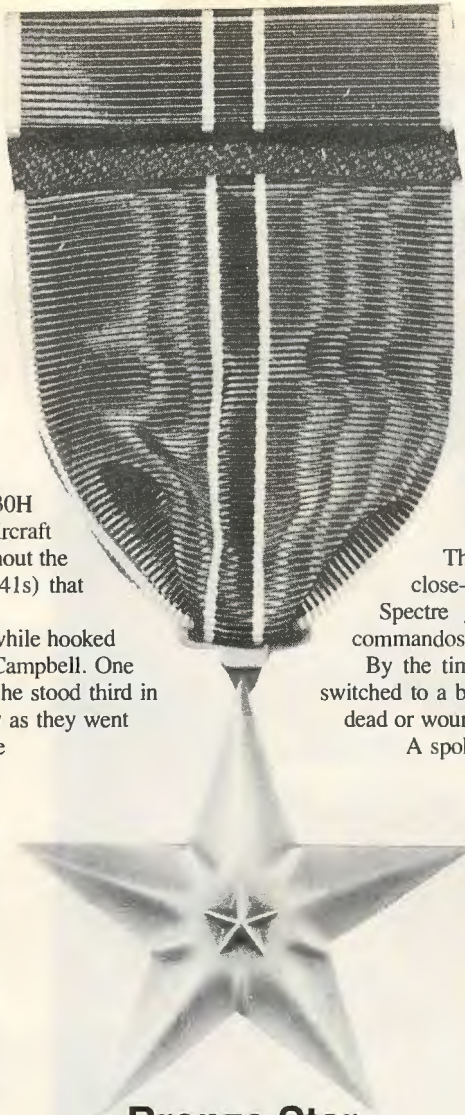
"When we jumped in, they (AC-130H Spectre gunships) had knocked out the anti-aircraft guns," said PFC Dean Hohl, "but even without the AA, all the birds (11 C-130s and two C-141s) that took us in sustained battle damage."

"Some of the guys in my plane were hit while hooked up to jump," said Private First Class Chris Campbell. One Ranger was shot in the back of the head as he stood third in line to jump. Buddies stepped over his body as they went out the door. The fallen Ranger survived the head wound, but four comrades were killed in action at Rio Hato.

More than 1,000 medals were awarded soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who participated in Operation Just Cause. Of the 899 Combat Infantryman Badges awarded by the Army, 403 went to men of the 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry, 39 of the 66 Combat Medical Badges and 36 of the 208 Purple Hearts also went to the 4th Bn.

The Marine Corps awarded three Purple Hearts for leathernecks wounded during the invasion, plus one to First Lieutenant Robert Paz whose death on 16 December, and the beating and sexual harassment of two witnesses, a Navy lieutenant and his wife, prompted President Bush to say, "Enough is enough," before ordering the invasion of Panama.

The Navy awarded 13 Purple Hearts, four posthumously to SEALs, the Navy's elite commando team. The other nine Purple Hearts went to members of the



Bronze Star
For distinguished heroic
or military achievement
or service not involving
aerial flight.

team wounded while attacking Punta Paitilla airport where General Noriega kept a getaway plane.

Sources close to the ill-fated waterborne assault on the seaside airfield say the SEALs got caught in the open on the ramp at the airport. The SEALs apparently didn't know heavily armed PDF soldiers were lurking inside a hangar where Noriega's Learjet was parked, and stumbled into an ambush. As the first platoon of commandos approached the hangar, sources say they apparently committed a tactical error of allowing themselves to become silhouetted against the backlit ramp and were gunned down like sitting ducks.

The SEALs were equipped with Fox-Mikes (FM radios) that have secure radio channels.

They were supposed to use those radios to call for close-air support from an Air Force AC-130H Spectre gunship orbiting over the airfield. But the commandos call for help was not heard.

By the time a radio operator with the commando team switched to a backup UHF radio, 13 members of his unit lay dead or wounded on the tarmac at Punta Paitilla airport.

A spokesman for the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida, which was responsible for air cover, said, "We could have nailed the hell out of the PDF, but we never got a call." All the Spectre crew could do was watch helplessly on its low-light-level television camera as the SEALs got hosed in front of the hangar.

The SEALs, based at Little Creek, Virginia, refuse to answer questions about the snafu. The Air Force has also clammed up on the commando raid. "It's too sensitive," said a senior officer.

But Colonel George A. Gray, commander of 1st SOW, insists a problem with the fire control system aboard Spectre over Paitilla did not contribute to the disaster. "The problem occurred at 0230, an hour and a half after the raid went down," said Col. Gray who scrambled an alert bird at Howard Air Force Base to replace the disabled gunship.

The airport at Punta Paitilla was a strategic target for three reasons. First, it



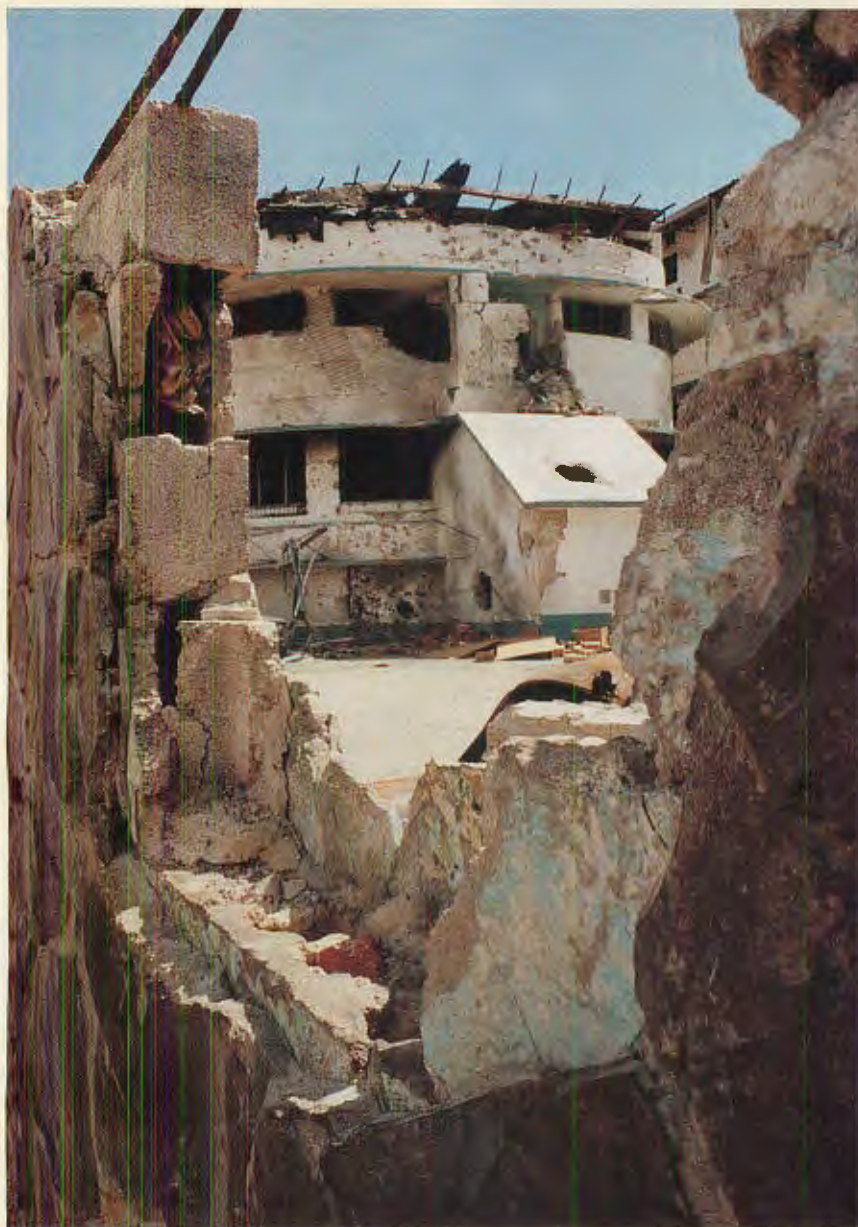
Photo: Margaret Brewster

First Lieutenant Robert A. Nabb commanded and coordinated supporting fire while exposed to heavy enemy fire throughout the battle for PDF HQ.



Photo: Margaret Brewster

Specialist Charles E. Berry replaced his mortally wounded track commander (Cpl. Perez) and provided accurate suppressive fire against the enemy.



View of the Commandancia after the all-night battle indicates the ferocity of the fighting that went on there. Photo: Ross Simpson

was where Noriega kept his plane. Second, it was a base of operations for drug smugglers, and third, it was where Panama's 7th Infantry Company landed to repulse a 3 October coup attempt against General Noriega.

U.S. military planners didn't want the airport to be used again by Panama Defense Forces, and they certainly didn't want Manuel Noriega to escape in his Learjet.

Seventy-three days after the invasion of Panama, a man yelling, "Viva Noriega!" hurled a hand grenade into a crowded disco in Panama City, killing an American soldier from the 193rd Infantry Brigade, the in-country unit that led the assault on the General's headquarters. Fifteen other GIs and 11 civilians were wounded. The attack occurred a few hours after Noriega's wife, three daughters and grandson left Panama for Cuba. While everyone hopes the attack was an isolated incident, an uneasy calm has settled over Panama City.

The incident demonstrates that even though the battle has been won, the War is not completely over. But with men such as those described in this article on our side, the final outcome is not in doubt.

SOF salutes the heroes and participants of Operation Just Cause.

Ross Simpson has traveled widely in his 12 years as a radio correspondent. He currently works out of Washington D.C. for NBC radio and found himself in Panama when Just Cause went down. This is his third article on that operation for SOF; see also "Devil in Disguise," May '90 and "Lethal Leathernecks," June '90.



Photo: Margaret Brewster

Private 2 Louis O. Miller volunteered for mission of saving disabled APC in line of enemy fire.



Photo: Margaret Brewster

Specialist Paul D. Gibson left his track and provided suppressive fire which enabled the vehicle's crew to evacuate safely.

INTERVIEW: GENERAL THOMAS W. KELLY

Soldier of Fortune magazine interviewed General Thomas W. Kelly on 30 January at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. General Kelly was the keynote speaker at Operation "Just Thank You," a civilian and military salute to the men and women of McGuire's 438th and 514th Military Airlift Wings who helped make Operation Just Cause a success.

SOF: Welcome back, General Kelly, to what is familiar terrain to you as the former CO of neighboring Fort Dix. Looking back at the way things went with Just Cause, would you have made any substantial changes in the overall plan of the operation?

Kelly: No, I don't think so. And we've been asked that question a number of times as you may well imagine. No operation is perfect, obviously, but I think this one came pretty close to being solidly planned and well executed, so I wouldn't have made any big changes.

SOF: Do you think the success of the deployment of the Light Infantry Division in Just Cause means LIDs have a future in the U.S. Army?

Kelly: I think the concept of the Light Infantry Division was validated. Basically, what we put down there were two brigades of light infantry behind a brigade of the 82nd Airborne and a Ranger regiment, and they performed very well, so if that validates the concept, I guess the answer is yes.

SOF: As you know, the concept of airborne assault itself has been under attack for some time now by military thinkers. Is there still a tactical place for the airborne soldier on the helicopter-dominated battlefield of the future?

Kelly: Absolutely. You can put a brigade on the ground in 10 minutes in an airborne assault, and it's going to take you a day and a half to land that same force any other way. They were able to go like that and hit their targets and be combat-ready relatively quickly after they got on the ground, and there's no way we could have done that otherwise — and you're certainly not going to fly helicopters from Fort Bragg to Panama.

SOF: Analysis of the after-action reports of both the Panama and Grenada operations reveal that the special ops people, SEALs especially, took very high casualties, excessively high, in fact. Any rethinking in high places about changes in the future deployment of these people in light of these casualty rates?

Kelly: As you know, we don't talk about

special operations: I will tell you I don't think anything was excessive down there. You know, when the guns are loaded, it's a dangerous environment.

SOF: How would you reply to those who say that a commando-style operation to grab Noriega would have been less costly all around than the *coup de main* type of full-scale operation we launched?

Kelly: I think they are totally wrong. You have to remember — and this is a major, major point — we went down there to restore democracy to Panama, to protect

chain of command was short and tight — it went from the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman to Thurman to Steiner, and all forces (to include the Special Operations Forces) were under General Steiner's command for the operation. And that's one of the main reasons it went well.

SOF: Was Operation Just Cause a reworking of a contingency plan already in place in the files, or was it a totally new plan?

Kelly: We had been working on a plan for some time, one called Blue Spoon, a funny name but one which you might stumble across and not think anything of. And that had been in the works for a long time because we knew we were having trouble with Panama, and we knew that we might have to go there. But starting with the failed coup against Noriega on 3 October which was, realistically, the first duty day for Thurman and for General Powell, the plan was reviewed, restructured somewhat — not a lot, but the main thing that was changed in the plan was the method of insertion: airborne — and the chain of command.

SOF: How would you characterize the effectiveness or elan of our fighting men in combat in Panama, and how would you compare this to that of their older

brothers and fathers in other conflicts?

Kelly: First, I'd like to look at that in isolation and say they did a superb job. I got down there, I guess, the second Friday of the operation, and I was really impressed as I always am. You know, the young folks we're getting in the service today are at least the equal of any that we've ever gotten. Their attitude is good. The Panamanians would come up, talk to them, and be very open, but when the civilians saw somebody who looked as if he might be a PDF guy, they'd clam right up. Our soldiers were treating the people well and they knew it. As a matter of fact, most of the devastation you saw on TV was just around the Commandancia — the rest of Panama City was fine. They did a great job in comparison with their older brothers, and fathers, and grandfathers. And they did well because I think the American fighting man has always given a good account of himself.

SOF: Many thanks, General Kelly. You mentioned earlier you were a reader of *SOF*. Any last words for the magazine?

Kelly: (Grinning) Just keep those cards and letters coming in.

— Ed Brown



American lives, to secure the Panama Canal Zone, and to get Noriega, about in that order. If we had gone in with a "surgical strike" and taken Noriega out, we probably would have had some thug in right behind running the PDF, and in no time at all we'd have been right back where we started. Restoring democracy in Panama, I think, is what people ought to concentrate on, not simply getting the thug Noriega.

SOF: Was President Bush closely involved in the planning phase of Operation Just Cause?

Kelly: He wasn't in the day-by-day planning, obviously, but he was deeply involved and he, as the only one who could, made the decisions, and then kept himself informed. But I will tell you that the national leadership gave the troops on the ground the authority, the leeway and the flexibility to do their jobs. There were no "rudder orders," no "right turn, left turn, do this, do that," none. So that General Steiner, the commander of the 18th Airborne Corps and General Thurmand, the CIC of Southern Region, were able to accomplish their mission within a plan that they had constructed. Very key is that the

YELLOW RAIN

Airborne Chemwar Continues to Poison Laos

by Tom Peterson

Photos by Max Weale

Last month this author covered the military aspects of the struggle of H'mong ELOL freedom fighters against the communist dictatorship in Laos. This month he reveals the continuing, heartless chem/bio campaign waged indiscriminately against the freedom fighters and their non-combatant families since the 1970s.

THE continuing offensive against the Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos (ELOL) by the Lao People's Army (LPA) in north and central Laos has led to new reports of chemical weapons being employed by the government forces. This is the first time such accounts have emerged since 1981.

Last February/March this reporter returned with photographer Max Weale to the area of ELOL's Nam Pouy base in Sayaboury Province, about 170km northwest of the Laotian capital of Vientiane. We hoped to find definitive information on the reported chemical attacks and how they interfaced with the on-going fighting between regime and insurgent forces.

The morning before we crossed the Thai/Lao border, two ELOL guerrillas had been injured when one of them stepped on an antipersonnel mine while patrolling south along the border towards the old Nam Lop base of another resistance group, the Lao United Front (LUF), overrun and now occupied by the LPA. ELOL officers told us that since ejecting the LUF from the Lao side in mid-January, the LPA had moved 3km into Thailand to dig in positions and lay mines to prevent any resistance forces from returning to the area.

Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP) and defense volunteers had been brought up to contain the incursion, but no operation had yet been conducted to push the LPA back into Laos. The presence of these regime troops on their southern flank was obviously a cause of great concern for ELOL. Past incidents have shown the LPA to be no respecter of national boundaries, especially when hot trailing resistance fighters.

We laid low in a border village for a few hours before going in. In the same house

were H'mong women and children, reportedly suffering from illnesses caused by chemical attacks. They were waiting for transport to the Thai hospital in Nan.

After midnight the one survivor of the mine blast was brought in on a makeshift stretcher after a torturous hour-long journey over the hills. A further trip in the back of a pick-up truck would take him to a Thai hospital. His colleague had lost one leg below the knee and one hand, and died before he could be evacuated.

With an escort of four H'mongs, one of whom had previously been a guerrilla with the Communist Party of Thailand, we took to the hills. By daybreak we had arrived in a familiar ELOL village. Everything seemed the same, but this time everyone we met talked about chemical weapons.

"We strongly believe that the Lao government is once again using chemical weapons against us. We want you to see this for yourselves," Yang Thao, the ELOL chief of staff told us over breakfast.

Later he showed us dried yellow droplets on leaves, clothes and the ground, plus some samples he had collected in a small plastic bag. These droplets were scattered throughout the settlement.

That day, 28 February, at 1000 we saw fresh droplets appear. The strange watery substance had a bright yellow color that turned brownish when it dried after about five minutes. At the time the droplets appeared the wind was blowing in a westerly direction, from inside Laos.

The droplets continued to appear throughout the four ELOL-run villages in the Nam Pouy area until 3 March, nearly the entire time of our stay. They usually appeared either between 1000 and 1030, or 1200 and 1400. Every time the droplets appeared the wind was blowing from inside Laos.

Yang Thao said that the substance was first sighted on 15 January. This was followed by further sightings the following month on 12, 13, 17, 19 and 21 up to 28 February, the day we arrived.

After these scattered droplets appeared, 71 people suddenly became ill with symp-

toms of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and tightness in the temples, throat, chest and stomach. The ELOL officer told us that so far three had died, all very young children.

"The most seriously affected have been the very young and the very old, who have less resistance to diseases," Yang Thao said.

Although some of the sick had been taken to the Thai hospital in Nan, most were being treated with herbal medicines due to a serious shortage of modern drugs.

Doctors at the Thai hospital say the H'mong patients are suffering from poisoning by some sort of toxin. Initial lab tests done by the hospital on the yellow substance say that it is a mycotoxin of unknown origin — certainly not something naturally seen in this area.

We interviewed 24 people who said they became ill after contact, in one way or another, with the substance.

The mother of Keng Li, 2, and Zhe Li, 3, said both suffered from diarrhea and vomiting after playing on ground where the yellow droplets appeared. Her other child had been taken to the hospital in serious condition.

Por Jua Yang, 18, said he suffered nausea and vomiting after working in a garden marked by the yellow drops.

Zua Li, 50, said that for the past 10 days she had suffered headaches and a tightness in the chest after working in fields where the yellow droplets were sighted.

Father and mother, Nghia Zhong Cheng, 50 and Naw Li, 45 along with their four children all suffered from nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and a tightness in their chest and stomach. The parents had swept the dusty ground around their house which had been marked by the yellow droplets. They believe they inhaled the substance with the dust kicked up by the sweeping. Their children had been playing on the same ground.

In all cases the people were in situations where they could have inhaled the substance, either by working in the dried-up and dusty fields or from the dust particles



ELOL guerrillas collect samples of Yellow Rain from plants in H'mong village, Nam Pouy. Man in camo uniform is Yang Thao, ELOL chief of staff. INSET: Toxic droplets are bright yellow when they fall, soon darken to brown when they dry.

stirred up while sweeping the ground around their houses. Others ingested vegetables from plots where numerous traces appeared. The children could likewise have inhaled or ingested the substance while playing on the ground where it had fallen.

If the yellow substance is a toxic agent being used by the LPA, then the question remains of how it is being delivered.

Earlier in January, ELOL intelligence had received a report of 120 chemical rounds being brought to Sayaboury. The report further stated that 20 of these had been sent out to the field. Another report also claimed that some type of multi-barrelled launcher for the rounds was being brought up.

"At the time we received them, we were very skeptical of these reports. Now we're

not so sure if maybe there really is something to them," Tang Thao told us.

No firing of any launcher or heavy weapon could be heard from where we were in the base area when the traces appeared. However, ELOL forward patrols did report a heavy weapon or launcher of some type being fired twice on 23 February and once on 3 March from an area where two LPA positions are located, six and 10km west of where we were, respectively.

The unusual part of these reports is that no sound of a projectile impacting on the ground or exploding in the air was heard, as would normally happen. Five to 10 minutes after the reported firing the yellow droplets appeared in the area. Of course, without further investigation by experts, more intelligence and perhaps even the capture of the reported chemical munitions, it is still difficult to prove conclusively that the LPA is using a toxic agent against the Nam Pouy area.

But it is possible to state what is known

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Victims of Yellow Rain attacks — most severely affected are the very young and very old. Fever, vomiting and diarrhea are the most universal symptoms, along with headaches, dizziness, stomach pains and tightness in chest. The above victims were in areas contaminated by the yellow droplets.

Much of the world was taken by surprise in November 1989 when the Marxist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) launched its most ferocious and extensive offensive ever in a decade of insurgency aimed at toppling El Salvador's democratically elected government.

Underestimated by both the U.S. State Department and the Salvadoran government, the insurgents had actually been planning this "strategic offensive" for nearly three and a half years. Smuggling arms and ammunition into San Salvador for months, the guerrillas' methods included concealing grenades and RPG rounds in bushels of vegetables, stashing Kalashnikovs in caskets during fake funeral processions, and hiding blocks of TNT in gifts for nonexistent wedding ceremonies.

The Salvadoran armed forces had uncovered several FMLN arms caches and had heard fragments of plans that indicated an attack of some kind was imminent, but they did not know that the FMLN would commit nearly its entire force — as many as 6,000 combatants — in an all-out attempt to deliver a knockout punch to the government.

AMERICAN military officers at the U.S. embassy in San Salvador realized that something was going on when only six of 30 Salvadoran officers and their families invited to the Marine ball showed up. The no-shows sent their apologies, explaining they were on alert.

While revelers at the American Marine ball were nursing hangovers the morning after, the guerrillas hit. At 0900 on 11 November, a truck rumbling over the potholed streets of San Salvador's northern working-class barrio of Ciudad Delgado stopped and its passengers, FMLN urban commandos, fired what was apparently a homemade mortar at a National Guard installation. They missed their target but killed two little boys playing in an alley.

Major guerrilla attacks were launched simultaneously against San Salvador, Santa Ana, Zacatecoluca, Usulután, and San Miguel.



One-year-old Juan Carlos Rodriguez and 4-year-old Jose Henri Chicas seemed at the time to be the latest victims of sporadic left-wing terrorism. However, events soon proved that they were the first victims of the FMLN's "strategic offensive," which would leave thousands of soldiers, guerrillas and civilians dead or wounded in three weeks of vicious street fighting.

That evening all hell broke loose. Not only in San Salvador, but in the major cities of San Miguel, Santa Ana, Usulután and Zacatecoluca as well. FMLN commando squads, heavily armed with LAW rockets, RPG-18s, TNT and Kalashnikovs, almost simultaneously attacked President Cristiani's official and private residences, the hotel in San Miguel where Vice-President Francisco Merino was lodging during an official visit, and the respective residences of the president and vice-president of the legislative assembly.

President Cristiani was at neither residence when the guerrillas attacked them. No casualties were reported when the presidential security detail repelled guerrillas who arrived a block from the president's private home in the exclusive Maquilishuat colony. After a fierce exchange of gunfire, the guerrillas fled, leaving behind shot-up hulks of the stolen cars they had arrived in and used as barricades.

Three guerrillas and a government corporal were reportedly killed in the assault on the president's official residence. Another three guerrillas, one identified as a university student, were also reportedly killed at the home of the vice-president of the legislative assembly, while the two policemen guarding the home of the legislative assembly's president were wounded repelling a 45 minute guerrilla attack.

"We were attacked from a red pick-up with LAWs, RPG-18s and with gunfire," recounted Agent Gonzalez, one of the pair of police guarding the president of the legislative assembly and his family. The



hefty trooper held his hand above the still tender scar of a bullet wound he received near his eye that night. "They destroyed our trench. We took other positions. They were attacking us on different flanks and tried to get into the house but we defended it. The fire was very strong. While my comrade was repelling the attack, I evacuated the president and his family to a neighboring house. My comrade was wounded by a LAW, but reinforcements came to help us and they (the guerrillas) fled. There were about 20 terrorists."

Guerrillas Occupy Barrios

The safety of the government leadership was secured. But tens of thousands of Salvadorans by now were trapped in a hailstorm of bullets, explosions and shrapnel. The FMLN mobilized the bulk of its force, estimated by Salvadoran military intelligence as between 2,000 and 3,000 fighters, to occupy positions in the working-class districts of Zacamil, Ayuxtutepeque, Mejicanos, Cuscatancingo, Ciudad Delgado and Soyapango on the northern and eastern periphery of the capital, about 3-5 kilometers from downtown.



BATTLE OF FIVE CITIES

El Salvador's Communist FMLN Guerrillas Banked on the People Rising Up in Revolution — They Didn't

by Steve Salisbury

SEPTEMBER 90

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 49



ABOVE: Sites of major fighting in the streets of San Salvador and its suburbs.



Salvadoran paratrooper armed with M16 with attached M203 on outskirts of San Salvador. Photo: Steve Salisbury

Guerrilla sappers sabotaged the power grid and blacked out the city to cover their comrades' advance. Guerrillas who had long ago infiltrated San Salvador posing as civilians took out hidden prepositioned arms and supported the arrival of FMLN columns coming down from San Salvador volcano a few kilometers west of the capital. Snaking through ravines and wading the length of streams under the cloak of darkness, these rebel forces

avoided army patrols to reach their areas of operation.

The guerrillas immediately erected barricades in the streets by using anything from garbage to commandeered vehicles. They shot up cars and buses to paralyze transportation. Guerrillas forced their way into people's homes and knocked holes through walls separating houses to facilitate mobility and communication.

The guerrillas' mission was clear: they

wanted to take control of territory in the heart of the city and hold it at any cost. According to a captured FMLN battle order issued 31 October, they hoped that fighting in the city would cause thousands of casualties, including many civilians, which would turn the people to the side of the FMLN. The battle order stated confidently, "The masses will feel fear, later they will give timid support and once we prove that we are not going to retreat they will join us."

The people indeed felt fear, but instead of supporting the guerrillas they fled when the opportunity arose. Some residents were so terrified of the guerrillas, they fled during the dusk to dawn curfew imposed by the government on 12 November.

The FMLN tried to stop this mass exodus. "We practically were in captivity for five days," related Carlos Sandoval near the shot-up school where he teaches in Zacamil. "The *senores* of the FMLN did not let us leave or buy food ... We were defense for them so that the army wouldn't attack this zone. They were using us as a shield. They forced the people of the neighborhood to dig trenches and help them. They could do this because they had weapons."

"It was horrifying," said Sonia de Fuentes, who lived nearby in an apartment complex seriously damaged by rockets and gunfire. "There was a horrible tension. Fear. Panic. I'm mother of three sons. I was afraid that they (the guerrillas) would take my sons because they were short of



Guerrillas erected barricades in streets using anything handy. Photo: Jeremy Bigwood/Gamma Liaison

people. I was crazy with fear that they would say any moment, 'Take a weapon.'"

Senora de Fuentes was fortunate to escape with her children. The guerrillas "were so young," she sighed with pity. "Many were just little kids. How can it be?"

Many of these youth, as well as adults,

FOUR SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS

Heavy fighting erupted not only in El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, but in the major cities of Santa Ana, San Miguel, Zacatecoluca and Usulután.

Battle of San Miguel

San Miguel, El Salvador's third largest city, was probably in the most danger of being taken by Marxist guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

When the guerrillas attacked this important commercial city of about 150,000 at approximately 2000 hours on 11 November, most of the army troops based there were dozens of kilometers away in the mountains. They had been notified of an impending FMLN assault on San Miguel and were heading back as fast as they could, but were still days away. The greatly outnumbered armed forces in town had to hold off the guerrilla onslaught in the meantime.

"We only counted on 150, maybe 200 soldiers, and another 110 men of the police force stationed in the city, when the offensive commenced," said Colonel Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, commander of the Third Brigade, which is headquartered in San Miguel. "I calculated the forces of our enemy ranged between 700 and 1,400 men."

As in San Salvador, the FMLN hit the poor and low-working class areas on the northern and eastern fringes of the city. However, the guerrillas complicated the armed forces' reaction by also trying to take the power station and hospital in southwest San Miguel in what Col. Vargas thought would be a prelude to a direct assault on the Third Brigade.

Colonel Vargas' immediate concern was for the safety of El Salvador's Vice-President Francisco Merino. The vice-president was at San Miguel's Tropic Inn on an official visit and the guerrillas were trying to seize his hotel. Vargas, accompanied by an escort of only eight men, left the Third Brigade and fought his way eastbound across the city to the vice-president's hotel. As his soldiers beat back the guerrillas Col. Vargas beefed up security until he was able to evacuate the vice-president to San Salvador the next day.

The guerrillas penetrated many barrios, using schools as their command posts. But Col. Vargas, widely considered the Salvadoran army's best field commander today, boldly maneuvered his skeletal forces to prevent the guerrillas from taking the

hospital, the power station, the Third Brigade and other important military and economic installations. The guerrillas tried their hardest to penetrate downtown, but Col. Vargas' men thwarted them. Within 48 hours the army had contained the guerrilla threat in the southwest and started to put primary focus on the northeastern periphery.

On 15 and 16 November, the army defenders were bolstered by the return of the Third Brigade battalions that had been patrolling dozens of kilometers north when the offensive started, as well as by the arrival of reinforcements from other bases.

The increase of army strength to between 1,800 and 2,000 troops overwhelmed the guerrillas, who panicked and vented their frustration on the civilian population. According to Col. Vargas, "When the people didn't join the insurrection, the FMLN fired its own mortars into the civilian populations, saying to the population that the armed forces were going to blow away everything anyway and that it would be better for them to join the FMLN. According to the people, the FMLN fired mortars into their community three times."

The final action took place in eastern San Miguel where the guerrillas had dug in their rearguard. Thousands of civilians were trapped in this area and Col. Vargas had to finesse his counterattack to force the guerrillas into a sparsely populated area outside of town where the decisive battle was fought.

Air support, which had limited use in San Miguel throughout the offensive, then blasted FMLN positions, forcing the guerrillas into disorganized retreat. All that remained were mop-up operations.

Battle of Zacatecoluca

Zacatecoluca, a provincial capital of perhaps 20,000 inhabitants, was also severely tested by the FMLN. According to military intelligence, some 500 guerrillas tried to overrun this sleepy town 57 kilometers southeast of San Salvador. On 12 November, the day after their attack began, guerrillas took the Santa Teresa hospital, blowing up and burning part of one of its floors. Climbing to the third floor, the guerrillas found Carlos Alberto Penas Flores, a soldier receiving medical treatment, and hurled him out a window to his death.

However, the guerrillas underestimated the fighting spirit of the army engineer battalion defending the

town. After several days of savage combat they retreated from the town in defeat.

Battle of Usulután

The FMLN got off on the wrong foot attacking the southeastern city of Usulután. At the end of October, troops of the 6th Brigade, headquartered in Usulután, ambushed a guerrilla caravan and captured 1,000 pounds of TNT. Noting that the rebels were moving north to south, in the direction of Usulután, the 6th Brigade was alert for a large scale assault on the city. On 10 November, the Atonal Immediate Reaction Battalion made contact with a large guerrilla unit and captured factory-wrapped, brand new RPG rounds. That same day an army informant reported the avenues of the guerrilla's approach.

Despite all of these setbacks, guerrillas attacked Usulután on 11 November. "There were between 400 and 800 terrorists, but we were ready for them," recalls Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Hernandez Quintanilla, the 6th Brigade's commanding officer. "Except for a few snipers who infiltrated the town, we stopped them outside (the city limits)."

The cemetery, about a kilometer west of town, was the principal killing ground. It seemed the only luck the guerrillas had was when one of their catapults hit army headquarters with a handmade explosive round, causing material damage and wounding two soldiers.

After four or five days, the guerrillas retreated, only to return on 29 November with a lesser force of maybe 180 men. They were whipped again on the edge of town in half the time it took the first time.

Battle of Santa Ana

Santa Ana, El Salvador's second largest city at more than 250,000 inhabitants, was also attacked by the FMLN on 11 November, but the approximately 250 guerrillas who made up the attack force were quickly repulsed on the outskirts of the city. According to a U.S. military adviser, "Santa Ana was a sideshow. It was probably planned as a diversion and to tie down troops that could be used as reinforcements in the other battles."

The Salvadoran armed forces proved their courage in successfully defending their towns and cities. But soldiers couldn't have done it alone, says Col. Vargas. "Our success is owed to the civilian population. That's the fundamental factor."



FMLN guerrilla on guard outside Sheraton Hotel, San Salvador. Photo: AP/Wide World

were press-ganged into the FMLN's ranks. FMLN units stepped up their practice of forced recruiting for the offensive, according to captured guerrilla political officer Pedro, despite warnings from the FMLN directors of the negative effects it could have.

"My unit had to raise enough men to form two more platoons. I was told to raise the consciousness of the people so that they would join. In my area of Aguas Calientes I asked a group of about 30 to 40 boys to meet me outside the village for a conversation. It's always easier to recruit someone when you separate him from his family and the things that could make him decide not to join the struggle. But I had to temporarily leave for another matter. I returned to find out that a commander recruited them by force, threatening them with expulsion from their homes if they did not join."

Foreigners Involved

People who encountered the guerrillas claimed foreigners made up part of their forces. They observed rebels with strange accents and physical characteristics rare for Salvadorans like fair skin, large physiques and blond hair.

An official at the U.S. embassy in San Salvador said that although government forces rounded up and deported over a dozen foreigners — including Americans, Canadians and Western Europeans — associated with activist groups considered FMLN fronts, but there were no foreigners captured fighting or found dead. He believed reports to the contrary were "the hysteria of people trapped in desperate circumstances."

However, in San Miguel, Colonel Mauricio Ernesto Vargas claimed one of the guerrilla casualties was a Mexican academic. And, in a case that has received wide attention, security forces found buried in the yard of Jennifer Jean Cassolo, an

American church worker, a large arsenal of ComBloc weapons thought to be destined for the guerrillas. (See "Church Merc Unmasked," SOF, May 1990).

"We think there could have been as many as 150 foreigners of varying nationalities with the guerrillas, but they principally had logistical and medical support missions," said a high-ranking Salvadoran army intelligence officer.

Failure to Take

Ilopango Air Base Crucial

Whatever the extent of foreign participation with the guerrillas during the offensive, one thing is for certain: The majority of the guerrillas were from the rural provinces and did not know the capital well.

"They kept getting lost," said Lieutenant Colonel Rivera Aleman of the National Police. "A column of terrorists would ask the civilians for directions to Escalon while they were headed for Soyapango in the opposite direction."



Author Salisbury with Third Brigade Commander Colonel Mauricio Ernesto Vargas. Photo: Steve Salisbury

This confusion was a major factor in the guerrillas' failure to take military bases crucial to their plans for victory. Their prime target was Ilopango Air Force Base.

"We think they wanted to take Ilopango because it would stop us from using air

power against them, and also because they would use our own aircraft against us and fly in reinforcements from Nicaragua," said Major Rene Alcides Rodriguez Hurtado, then commander of the Salvadoran paratroopers. "Civilians told us they saw men in flight suits with the subversives probably for this motive."

"The FMLN was sending messages that 1,500 guerrillas in Nicaragua were waiting to be flown in once the air base was taken," said a U.S. communications specialist who monitored guerrilla radio traffic during the offensive.

American embassy officials who analyzed these intercepts thought this was an FMLN disinformation campaign to boost the morale of its own fighters with the news that help would be on the way, and to force the army to dissipate its forces for such a contingency and thus demoralize it.

The FMLN hoped to spark a revolt by government troops against their officers, but this did not occur either. In fact, the army showed more spirit and cohesion than ever and its troops fought courageously. Many soldiers were inspired by the personal cause of freeing their families who lived in the poor barrios the guerrillas occupied.

Salvadoran paratroopers and special forces stopped the FMLN move on Ilopango Air Base at least a kilometer from its perimeter. At the same time Atlacatl battalion, other immediate reaction battalions and the cavalry, coming from bases outside the capital to reinforce the severely strained local forces, frustrated guerrilla thrusts toward the northern part of the city, and down the slopes of San Jacinto Volcano toward the presidential palace and the army's Center of Transmissions Instruction in southeastern San Salvador. Not blocking army reinforcements was probably the greatest tactical mistake made by the FMLN.

The toughest task still remained for the armed forces: clearing the guerrillas out of heavily populated barrios. "Let me tell you, friend, it was tough and go there for a while," said an American military officer whose vehicle's window was blown out by guerrilla sniper fire when he and his bodyguards stopped on their way to Ilopango.

Guerrilla Snipers Were Everywhere

Guerrilla snipers seemed to be everywhere — on roofs, in trees, in sewer manholes.

"Snipers were our worst problem," said Airborne battalion Sergeant Juan Francisco Cruz, who was wounded in the legs and stomach as he crawled in an open field trying to help a wounded comrade who would die in his arms. "They caused most of our casualties."

Myriad factors slowed the army's counterattack. A high-ranking American military officer at the U.S. embassy said that the ESAF (El Salvador Armed Forces) were well-organized but "there were the command and control problems inherent in

the confusion of combat — cases of battalions firing on each other's flanks. A lack of detailed maps complicated the situation. You have to remember, too, that there hadn't been pitched battles in the capital since the 1981 offensive and most of the soldiers didn't have experience in urban combat."

According to an airborne battalion lieutenant, urban combat tactics taught to paratroopers by SOF trainers were invaluable for the street fighting they encountered.

The principle factor slowing the armed forces advance was concern for the safety of civilians. Fifty percent of air force fire support missions were rejected because the lives of civilians would have been in danger.

"We held back from counterattacking in the capital the first few days until most of the civilians could escape from the enemy," remembered Captain Sergio Calix, commander of the Salvadoran air force's helicopter squadron, from his hospital bed. He was convalescing from bullet wounds in his arm suffered when guerrillas attacked his chopper taking off in Chalatenango province about four months after the offensive.

"We felt tied because the terrorists were using the civilian population to cover themselves," added Lieutenant Douglas Tochez, pilot of an M model Huey helicopter gunship. He lay in a bed near Captain Calix, recovering from shoulder and arm wounds suffered in the same incident. "The subversives would use the tactic of shooting at the helicopter when it passed and when it returned to attack, they would make civilians come out and raise white flags. Thus, we were limited in providing support for our infantry units. But we had to do something because the situation was critical; the infantry was pinned down."

"Once the civilian population was withdrawing, we started to act," continued Lt. Tochez. "But General Bustillo emphasized that we be very selective

Government troops take — and eventually held — the "high ground." Photo: Miguel Solis/Syigma



Housing project in Zacamil neighborhood occupied by guerrillas under automatic weapon and rocket fire from army troops. Photo: AP/Wide World

because civilians were still trapped by the terrorists. Aerial photographs helped us locate terrorist positions, and civilians who escaped gave us precise information. They told us the addresses of terrorist safe houses, where clandestine clinics were, where they had their logistic support."

A U.S. military officer who observed air force counterattacks told me, "The air force was crucial in turning the tide against the guerrillas and defeating them in the offensive. The AC-47 gunships and M model Hueys were very effective. But the guerrillas feared most the helicopters the Salvadoran air force calls the Hughes 500 (MacDonald Douglas now produces this

small, agile, bubble-shaped helicopter) — probably since it was so fast and maneuverable and could pursue them in difficult terrain."

House to House Combat

Still, the battle's outcome would be decided on the ground — by the grunts. Mobilizing eventually as many as 7,000 troops, spearheaded by Atlacatl battalion, the armed forces started rolling up guerrilla positions from west to east a couple of days after the offensive began in savage street fighting. Running, crawling and slithering from house to house, soldiers advanced in the thunderous torrent of gunfire and high explosive blasts that continued unabated for more than a week.

The first objective of the drive was to knock out guerrilla resistance at the Metropolitan Technological Institute in Zacamil district. The FMLN had set up a command post there. It was a choke point for rebel reinforcements coming down from San Salvador Volcano, a few clicks to the west. While helicopter gunships blasted rebel snipers out of upper floor rooms, soldiers obliterated tenacious guerrilla resistance with 90mm recoilless rifles, LAW rockets and .50 cal machine-gun fire and finally took the building on 16 November.

The armed forces then moved on the impoverished barrio of Mejicanos. The layout of the district's concrete and adobe houses and hilly terrain afforded the guerrillas an abundance of perfect ambush sites. The rebels compounded the army's problems by erecting a thicket of barricades that blocked the advance of armored personnel carriers. However, artillery and 81mm mortar support helped the infantry

CASUALTIES OF WAR

The Salvadoran armed forces' press office, COPREFA, reported the FMLN suffered 1,773 dead, 1,134 wounded and 583 captured between 11 November and 5 December. During this same period, the armed forces sustained 413 KIAs, 1,289 WIAs and 23 missing. The FMLN, in a rare acknowledgment of their casualties, admitted suffering 431 dead.

El Salvador's total armed forces number about 47,000. FMLN membership is probably somewhere around 10,000, with an unknown number of undeclared supporters. Obviously there weren't as many of the latter as the FMLN had hoped. Whatever figures one chooses to believe, many Salvadorans died during the FMLN's November offensive.

Continued on page 70

RKB PLAYS RED BARON

Top Gunning Over The Arizona Desert

by Robert K. Brown

I'VE got 'em in my sight ... I squeeze the red fire button on the stick ... He's trailing smoke ... a kill! The adrenaline rush ... the challenge ... the victory.

No doubt about it. I finally know what I want to do next time around. As most of my friends and staff know, I change my mind about this several times a day. But this time I'm sure. I'm going to be a Top Gun instructor at Nellis.

It all started with a recent article in *Time* magazine describing a "Top Gun" operation in California where would-be Red Barons plop down \$500 for an opportunity to test their skills against other Red Barons in simulated air-to-air combat. They use side-by-side trainers, and an instructor pilot who keeps the adventurers from violating environmental regs by fireballing into the local terrain.

I called Mike Dillon, owner of Dillon Precision, a manufacturer of reloading equipment in Scottsdale, Arizona.

"Mike," I asked, "what about holding this type of event at the September SOF Convention in Vegas?"

"No problem," he said, "I'm flying my planes up anyhow, so let's do it. Why don't you come down to Scottsdale and we'll give you a taste of what it's like. Bring an extra load of adrenaline."

The next Friday I arrive in Phoenix where Mike Dillon picks me up in his new black Hughes 500 E chopper and we whump-whump to his hangar, which contains three restored T-34 Air Force trainers.

I'm assigned to a plane that saw combat with the Salvadoran air force and had been equipped with a .30 cal Browning in each wing. Unfortunately, they've been replaced by dummies. The BATF is determined not to let anyone to have fun.

"The maneuvers you'll be doing today are the same as those practiced by Navy and Air Force fighter pilots." Lieutenant Colonel "Slick" Aguirre pauses for effect, "... after they have 18 months of instruction."

I raise an eyebrow or two, wrap my fingers around my brain, squeeze firmly and crunch into the same frame of mind I assumed prior to jumping from a Thai Airborne balloon in Thailand. "If the Crown Prince can do it, ... If the Crown Prince can ..."

The student's hour and 20 minutes in the air is preceded by a briefing. Slick, our briefer, got his nickname by flying Hueys in Vietnam at age 19. He now instructs air-to-air combat in the F-15 Eagle.

Slick continues, "After we break ground, Col. Brown, you'll get control of the aircraft. As soon as you get the feel of it you'll start flying enroute formation. Enroute means there is a 150-foot separation between aircraft. Then you'll get a chance to do 'cross under' maneuvers, in which you switch from left side to right side formation. That will be followed by battle or 'tactical formation' turns. Each student will have the chance to fly wingman and the lead positions."

The preflight briefing covers myriad topics: non-verbal signals, like wing wags and tail wags, hand signals and head nods; formation terms like "enroute," "in trail," "tactical" or "close"; safety terms like "200 foot bubble" and "lost sight" and "bailout"; combat terms like "fight's on" and "tracking" and "lag turn" and "snap shot" and "knock it off."

This all seems like too much to absorb. All too soon I find myself sliding into the front seat of the ex-military T-34A trainer.

I start by buckling on the parachute. At least this is one piece of equipment I know how to use. Seat belt, shoulder harness, check mags, battery and mixture and starter and suddenly I'm taxiing the plane out to the runway, right behind Slick and Chris Dillon, who are in "Number One." In the back seat of my bird, "Number Two," Mike Dillon coaches me out to the runway.

A short run-up to check the 300 hp engine, then five seconds after "One"

rolls, we push the throttle full forward and chase him into the air. With the gear coming up we turn inside "One's" turn, join up and rendezvous with the helicopter carrying the Dillon Precision staff photographer, Nyle Leatham. A few quick pictures and then we press on to the aerial battlefield.

Slick turns on his smoke and over the radio calls for me to follow him through some acrobatics. Around and around we go in barrel roll after barrel roll with a few loops thrown in. Mike keeps repeating, "keep your eyes on the other plane. Remember, lose sight, lose fight." Next we do several tactical formation turns, a method of changing heading while keeping the planes side-by-side about 1/2 to 1 mile apart. This is real battle formation, not tucked in close like you see in the movies.

Now it's time to fight. We go through several "set-ups," then it's time for the pinnacle, the acme, the climax: head-to-head, one-on-one, air combat.

We maneuver about 2 miles apart, then turn back towards each other to pass "just like on the highway." Here he comes, closer and faster. It's not quite like the highway. The other guy is closing at 400 mph! As Slick's plane flashes by on my left he calls, "Fight's On!!"

Mike prompts over the intercom, "Roll toward him. Put him in the top of the canopy and pull!"

I do it and we start coming around on his tail, but I have to work at it. Relax so we don't stall, turn away and then back (lag turning Mike calls it), pull the nose up to slow and position, then roll hard and pull, pull and there he is in the gun sight.

"DIE YOU BASTARD!"

Smoke streams out from Slick's stricken fighter and Mike calls "knock it off." Another kill. Four more and I'll be an ace (and watch that spelling).

In route formation now, headed for home. Mike says I'm catching on to this



Under the watchful eye of Mike Dillon, Bob pushes his T-34 into the lead as "Slick" Aguirre and Chris Dillon join on his wing. Aguirre is an F-15 instructor. Photo: Nyle Leatham



Catch me if you can! Brown, in T-34, tries to line up Slick in his gun sights over Arizona desert. Easier said than done. A hell of a thrilling challenge. Photo: Nyle Leatham



Dillon briefs Brown on tactics over the wing of a Canadian T-34. Dillon's T-34s are beautifully restored; their quality equals any award winning classic automobile. Photo: Nyle Leatham



Dillon, left and Brown before taking off in T-34 which was used by Salvadoran air force to fly combat missions against guerrillas. Brown was disturbed because the guns weren't real. Photo: Nyle Leatham

better than some 1,000-hour pilots he's flown with. That may be bullshit, but it still sounds good!

An overhead approach, pitch out and

landing.

Move over, Tom Cruise, here I come!

The Dillon Team will have their planes available at the SOF Convention. Slots are

limited so it's first come, first served. Cost: \$500 pre-registered, \$550 at Convention. Send \$250 to: Top Gun, c/o SOF, Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. ✉



AD HOC ADVISER

Colt Supplies M16A2s to Guat Paras — SOF Has to Provide the Training

Text & Photos by Jack Thompson

MY involvement with training Guatemalan soldiers to use their M16A2 battle rifles all started when I was working on a Guatemalan coffee farm near the Pochuta area. The farm had been attacked several times by guerrillas and I was hired to install security. I sent the security chief down to the local army base to get their permission to do some shooting.

On the appointed day I first realized that we had company when I saw some armed soldiers running around. I immediately recognized that they were Guatemalan army and sought out their commanding officer, a Lieutenant Barrera. Barrera's platoon, called Matalbatz, the fourth platoon of the Tecun company, had arrived — unannounced — to supervise the training.

Lieutenant Barrera turned out to be an interesting character. A very intelligent engineer officer, he has been in the army eight years and has fought against the insurgents ever since he graduated from the Politechnica, the Guatemalan version of West Point. I introduced myself to Lt. Barrera and invited him in for a cup of coffee as we discussed the training program. I informed him that I had done training with the Guatemalan army before, and that I am also an airborne soldier of the Guatemalan army.

Lieutenant Barrera and I struck up a

friendship immediately. I noticed that he carried the new M16A2. I had heard that the Guatemalans had adopted this new military rifle. They are the first foreign country with an insurgency problem to do so, and the airborne battalion is the first to be equipped with them. Lieutenant Barrera told me that the weapons were new to them; they had little training and therefore no confidence in the weapon at all. They didn't know how to zero it, they didn't know how to strip and assemble it, they didn't have the confidence necessary to carry it in battle. I told him that I thought I could help.

Lieutenant Barrera was supposed to spend 24 hours with us and ended up spending three days. During that time, I showed him everything I knew about the M16A2. We conducted classes for his platoon, for his squad leaders, platoon sergeants and for Lt. Barrera personally. We went over how to shoot and how to zero the weapon. He was an excellent shooter, his men performed well and Lt. Barrera told me that he would do his best to pass on the training to the rest of his company.

Returning to the city after finishing my work on the coffee farm, I decided to organize a trip to do an article for SOF on the Guatemalan army. When I talked with the people at the presidential palace, I asked if I could go out in the field with the same company I had instructed, the fourth company second battalion airborne, Tecun company. The Guatemalan military granted my request.

I was sent to the Chimaltenango district under the command of Colonel Quilo. Quilo is a tough guy. He looks like Guatemala's answer to "The Refrigerator"

— tough and strong, he could probably play offensive guard for the Chicago Bears, and he's as smart as he is tough.

We went south from Chimaltenango toward the town of Acatenango. The army base near there, at El Socorro, is two to three years old, and companies are rotated in and out. The area around El Socorro has a great deal of guerrilla activity, especially around a little town called Nejapa. Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) guerrillas are everywhere; they are tough and they like to fight.

Just before we left on our journey we heard a report of a firefight on the road in which a soldier had been killed. The truck I was in was civilian and we were all dressed in civilian clothes. The people I was with all carried Galil rifles, the small paratroop version. We proceeded very slowly, passing through a little town called Patzizia where there is a small army base. We checked on the state of the road and proceeded on our journey. As we got closer to Acatenango, at a very sharp bend in the road, we encountered an infantry platoon leader who verified that one soldier had been killed in action only a few minutes before.

Upon arriving at El Socorro base, I met the company commander of the Tecun company, Captain Jose Louis Barrientos. Captain Barrientos has been in the army for 10 years, originally as an artillery officer. A gentleman, a scholar and a deeply religious man who reads the bible daily and encourages others to do so, Cpt. Barrientos is a wide-eyed, alert officer who has been dealing with this guerrilla war ever since he got out of military school.

I was warmly welcomed by Cpt. Barri-

LEFT: Moving forward at the double, this grenadier moves quickly through Guatemalan coffee country.

INSET: While security keeps watch in the background, these men listen intently to patrol debrief.

INSURGENTS IN GUATEMALA

Insurgents in Guatemala are organized under an umbrella organization called the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), which includes EGP (Guerrilla Army of the Poor), FAR (Rebel Armed Forces) and ORPA (Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms). These groups are, in turn, supported by local committees, family cells and collaborators.

It is estimated that there are approximately 900-1,000 armed insurgents in Guatemala. Some 150-200 belong to ORPA, the guerrillas in the author's area of operation. ORPA started in 1979 as a splinter group of FAR (Rebel Armed Forces). They have gradually moved north from the Pacific Coast since 1980 and have been operating in the area around Chimaltenango since 1987.

— S. Max

entos and was given a tour of the base. The Tecun company has four platoons: the first is called Tikal, the second Balam, the third Tohil, and the fourth (my friends from the coffee farm) Matalbatz. I explained to Cpt. Barrientos that I was writing an article for SOF and that I would not interfere in his operation in any way. We had been talking no more than 10 minutes when a firefight broke out about half a mile away. I didn't know it at the time, but the fourth platoon had come under fire from an ORPA group and were busy slugging it out. I counted not less than seven PG-7 rounds fired, numerous rifle grenades and intense small arms fire for at least 20 minutes.

Captain Barrientos sent the Balam platoon to support Lt. Barrera and Matalbatz. They were a much stronger unit after they linked up, and 30 minutes later they again got into a heavy punch-up, including short but furious firefights, with numerous grenades fired and intense machine gun and small arms fire.

The area around Acatenango is very, very hot. It is an important strategic area to

both the government and the guerrillas because it effectively cuts the country in half. Within an hour and a half of being in the base, I had heard two firefights and I knew I was in for some more action. Captain Barrientos told me to make sure that I slept dressed and threw me an extra rifle. He jokingly asked me if I knew how to use it and I assured him that I did and would participate quite willingly in any encounters that came our way.

Unfortunately, the night was quiet, but 50 percent of the reserve troops who were in the base at the time were on alert the whole evening. The next morning, we had breakfast and I was given permission to go out on patrol with Cpt. Barrientos. I watched as he and his men prepared for battle. They were extremely safety conscious. They got into a line and loaded, then Cpt. Barrientos explained to the men where they were going, how they were getting there, what they were going to do once they got there, basically what the mission was. Like most airborne soldiers, it was obvious that the men were very loyal.



Guatemalan method of sling attachment: The sling is attached to paracord loops; one on the butt stock and the other on the front sight assembly. They can then hang the weapon over the neck.



Sling attached to front of M16A2.

And even though there were men from several different platoons and headquarters, they showed impressive unit cohesion.

Their patrol technique was solid, as is usually the case in Guatemala. They are rural people, used to fighting this guerrilla war and they know their way around the fields and how to move tactically in the bush. The men spread out when crossing open ground, moving silently. Captain Barrientos pointed out little patrol techniques, like not having your bush hat down around your ears so you can't hear or down around your eyes which blocks your vision. As we all know, small details are the things that win guerrilla wars.

We started clearing a section of road in preparation for the second platoon. There is



Sniper from 1st platoon observes enemy terrain. M16A2 with Colt 4-power is well liked by Guatemalans for its lightness.

a big ravine that goes through this area with only a few crossing points. The enemy keeps these crossing points under observation. The pointman in Guatemala carries an Israeli flak jacket, a helmet, and sometimes a Winchester 1200, 12-gauge, pump-action shotgun loaded with buckshot. When the pointman of the second platoon first saw me with my full beard and moustache, his eyes got as big as saucers and he started to raise the shotgun at me. Fortunately Cpt. Barrientos quickly held up his hand to keep the guy from shooting me. It was definitely a tense moment.

Lieutenant Vasquez of the Balam platoon came over and started describing the firefight to Cpt. Barrientos. They were having a lot of stoppages with the new M16A2s and the men did not feel comfortable with them. Barrientos turned to me and said in Spanish, "Well, I guess that was what you wanted to hear, isn't it?" I said it wasn't what I wanted to hear but I was here to find out how the weapon was doing in combat.

I'd brought some medical supplies with me. I know that soldiers in all armies have foot problems from not being able to change socks or stomach problems from drinking river water and other such things. So I had given Cpt. Barrientos some medical supplies and we held a little clinic where people could come and get patched up. The soldiers were relieved to have their foot problems and other common complaints worked on. The equipment and supplies were donated by SOF-sponsored Refugee Relief International, Inc.

That afternoon I went to the company commander and offered to do some training on the M16A2 for him and his men. It is best to get as many platoon leaders and squad leaders as possible together, although obviously you can't have everyone there because there are security functions to perform. That afternoon we rounded up some other officers and senior NCOs and I conducted training sessions on the little tricks of the M16A2. We went over such things as keeping the gaps on the gas rings separate, how to clean the chambers, how to disassemble and clean the bolt, how to take the magazines apart, to put only 27 rounds into the magazines instead of 30, how to adjust the sights and zero it, how to use the sling. Another small trick to prevent stoppages is to take apart the magazine and stretch the spring out a little bit. This insures that the tension remains in the spring even though the magazine is loaded for a long time. The next day the platoon sergeants passed these lessons on to the rest of the troops, so the information was disseminated quickly.

On the third day of my visit, we had a local clearance patrol around the base. I was able to inspect the base in its entirety and talk with a lot of the troops. Once a Guatemalan accepts you, he becomes quite hospitable. As an airborne soldier it was easy for me to be accepted by other airborne soldiers.

M16A2 RIFLE (COLT MODEL 701)

Weight (empty):	7.50 lb
Length:	39.63 in.
Mechanical features:	rifling, R.H., 6 grooves
Method of Operation:	gas
Type of Breech Mechanism:	rotating bolt
Method of Feeding:	magazine
Cooling:	air
Ammunition:	5.56 x 45mm NATO; Cartridge (M855 or SS 109) or 5.56x; 45mm U.S. Standard Cartridge (M193)
Firing Characteristics:	M855 [M193]
Muzzle Velocity	3110 [3250] ft/sec
Muzzle Energy	1302 [1270] ft lb
Chamber Pressure (max)	50750 [52000] psi
Cyclic Rate of Fire	700-950 rounds/min
Max Rate of Fire:	
Semiauto	45-65 rounds/min
Auto	150-200 rounds/min
Sustained Rate of Fire	12-15 rounds/min
Maximum Range	3935 [3902] yd



Later in the morning, a small Toyota Land Cruiser showed up to take me back to Chimaltenango. The driver, an escort and I got in and started north at breakneck speed. I have never gone over such bad roads at such a high speed, and I thought to myself, "I have been shot at in countries all over the world and now I'm going to die in a car accident in Guatemala." I finally asked the driver to slow down and he turned around to me with a wild-eyed look and said, "Listen pal, I've been ambushed 15 times on this road and I'll go as fast as I want to," and that was that. All along the way he would take his foot off the accelerator for a fraction of a second and say, "Yeah, I got ambushed here, I got ambushed over there," and it was like that the whole way up. He was definitely happy to get back onto the blacktop near Chimaltenango.

At Chimaltenango, I reported to Col. Quilo on my trip, then requested to go out with a unit armed with Galils. The Israeli-manufactured Galil 5.56mm has been the Guatemalan weapon for many years now, and any change from that weapon is usually met with dismay. The troops really like the Galil but it is getting quite old and they are in need of a change. Old timers who were around when Guatemala changed from the M1 Garand to the Galil will help the changeover to the M16A2 go a little more smoothly.

Only airborne units have the M16A2 at this time. My initial reaction to the state of training and level of confidence of the Guatemalan airborne in the new rifle was to call the military attache in the American Embassy and tell him that things were in a terrible state. Here we have a good weapon,

the M16A2, which has proven itself as an excellent rifle in the hands of troops whose lives depend upon it, and they aren't well-trained on the weapon. Subsequently I found out that the deal for the M16A2 was made between the government of Guatemala and Colt Industries, not the United States government.

When Guatemala bought the weapon, they did not buy a training package along with it. I do know that some of the Mil Group people at the embassy had been doing a small amount of training for the Guatemalan army on the M16A2, but this was above and beyond the deal that was made.

Since the deal between the Guatemalan government and Colt provided for 20,000 rifles for \$13.9 million with little training, the Guatemalan troops are going to have to learn as they go. And troops that have to learn a new rifle while they are fighting a war are destined to have a poor initial first impression of the weapon.

I sincerely hope that the M16A2 gets a chance to prove itself in Guatemala and that the Guatemalans will do everything they can to learn about the weapon as soon as possible. I made myself and the resources of SOF available to them while I was there. But the bottom line is that the weapon needs more maintenance than they are giving it. I hope that as they become accustomed to it the weapon will prove itself in the end.

Jack Thompson, a former Marine, is a frequent SOF contributor. He divides his time between his security consultant business and reporting for SOF from such places as Afghanistan, the Middle East and Central America.



AFGHAN DEMINERS

*U.N. Multinational Force Trains Muj to
Defuse the Killing Fields*

Text & Photos by Jake Border

JAN Mohammad, a 13-year old Uzbek boy, stared up at me from his hospital bed. The doctor, a Kabul-trained surgeon dressed in camouflage clothes, pulled back the bed covers.

The boy lifted his right arm free, his face devoid of expression. Encouraged by the doctor, he raised his left arm. It was neither a greeting nor a salute, and it would never be. Jan Mohammad's left hand was missing.

Curious about a strange-shaped green object he'd never seen before Jan Mohammad picked up a butterfly mine and blew

his left hand to shreds, necessitating the amputation of the bloody remains at the wrist.

Jan Mohammad fell victim to a lethal legacy of the nine-year Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, an antipersonnel mine.

The Soviets may have pulled out of Afghanistan but they left behind untold millions of deadly reminders of their visit. The country is littered with these mines which were laid in defensive perimeters around military bases and outposts (many of which have long since been abandoned), or scattered at random over fields, farms

Afghan trainees with "practice" explosive and fuse, wooden pegs and cord.

and mountains to deny access or strategic advantage to the mujahideen.

In addition to these nasty devices, which are designed not to kill but to maim, there are tons of unexploded ordnance (UXO) — bombs, rockets, grenades and ammunition — lying about, either live or duds, which continue to threaten peaceful existence long after the shooting has stopped.

Of course the war in Afghanistan continues between the muj and President Najibul-



ABOVE: New Zealand instructor demonstrates clearing technique during team leader course.

lah's communist regime based in Kabul, but escalating friction between the contesting muj factions has ensured that more bullets are being fired at each other than against the army of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).

Nevertheless, preparation is being made to facilitate the return of millions of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan back to their homeland.

Mine clearing is one of the most pressing requirements before refugees are safely able to go home, as the example of Jan Mohammad (and countless others like him) plainly indicates.

Even before the Soviet withdrawal the Secretary-General of the United Nations asked the office of the United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programs Relating to Afghanistan to work out a program in this regard. In September 1988 it issued a report which drew promises of support from various governments, resulting in assessment teams from the armed forces of France, Turkey and Britain being sent to Pakistan.

Operation Salam

On the basis of their recommendations a plan was implemented and by January 1989 the first teams of foreign military experts — from France, Turkey and the United States — arrived in the city of Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's North West Frontier province which borders Afghanistan. They were soon joined by contingents from Australia, Britain, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and Norway. These teams became known colloquially as the "deminers;" their UN-sponsored mission was officially called Operation Salam — meaning peace.

The deminers have proved no different from other Westerners arriving in Peshawar for the first time. Life on the border can be both frustrating and rewarding, the extremes of both the cultural and physical climate contributing to the former with professional satisfaction allowing the latter.

The first job was to identify the different



Afghans therefore involves tedious repetition of lessons over and over again until the trainees have absorbed the info and mastered the techniques — and the instructors are driven nuts with frustration and boredom.

The problems are rooted in a lack of formal education among the trainees. Not only are many illiterate but they also have difficulty understanding concepts such as maps and diagrams. Since few trainees can speak English the problems are compounded by the necessity of employing interpreters in the Pushtu and Dari languages.

For the Afghan trainees, all volunteers drawn equally from among the seven resistance parties based in Peshawar, a basic course lasts 15 days.

Amazing Variety of Mines

They are taught to recognize a dozen different types of Soviet and Eastern-bloc antipersonnel mines as well as several types of antitank mines, including Italian and British makes, some of which are used by both sides in the war.

"There is an amazing variety of mines here," remarked one of the New Zealand sappers, indicating a Mark VII British antitank mine. "That type must be at least 30 years old. They were used in Suez and again by the Israelis back in '67."

Some of the demonstration mines I recognized from the field. I have a good

LEFT: Muj-produced posters warn of dangers of mines.



ABOVE: Trainees insert detonators into Emulite explosive.

types of mines found in Afghanistan; the second, figure out how to deal with them. The deminers worked out a standardized program of instruction which began with a mine awareness course followed by a basic course in mine-clearing techniques.

Mine clearing doesn't come easy. It's gutsy work requiring a delicate blend of concentration and dexterity. While there is no question about the courage of Afghans, many of them demonstrate a lack of mental and manual discipline required for simple coordinated procedures. Anyone who has watched a muj trying to work a cigarette lighter for the first time will know what I mean.

Teaching the science of mine clearing to

collection of PFM-1 butterfly mine fragments as well as a heavy POMZ-2, which acts as an effective paperweight. I have seen these trip-wire activated AP-mines still guarding deserted Soviet posts along the Kunduz-Baghlan highway, and around the Kandahar airport.

The Soviet PMN-series of pressure-detonated AP blast-mines and the Italian TC-6 antitank mine (both types of plastic construction) are commonly encountered in Afghanistan. One type I'd never seen before was the Czech-made PPMiSr bounding fragmentation AP-mine. Buried

underground the mine is activated when three fine metal prongs are stepped on, sending the charge about waist high in the air, where it explodes in a deadly manner. There is a Russian version of the same mine found in Afghanistan, as well as a directional AP-mine like the U.S. claymore, called the MON-50.

Trainees are also taught to identify different types of UXO, its purpose, and how it was fired. They learn to recognize signs that might indicate an unmarked minefield, how to use probes to locate buried mines, and how to extract and dispose of these and other mines.

Trainees are taught three methods of mine disposal, all of which involve the use of live explosives. Mines can be blown up in situ, defused (and later blown up), or recovered live and blown up en masse. Centralized disposal offers the advantage of economical use of explosives.

Recovering live or defused mines can be hazardous; they are sometimes booby-trapped by placing another explosive underneath them. The Afghans are taught to counter this potential threat by the use of a simple grappling-iron, rope and tripod. The grappling-iron is hooked onto the exposed mine and the attached rope or cord passed over the tripod, allowing the deminer to lift the mine free from a safe distance.

Live Practice Grenades

To drive this message home to the trainees, as well as to introduce a touch of realism to the course, live practice-grenades (provided by the contingent of the French Foreign Legion) are sometimes hidden underneath one of the demonstration mines to be recovered.

I watched the Canadians pull this stunt one morning, secretly placing a small, blue, plastic grenade under an Italian antitank mine. The Afghans set up the grappling iron using a box for leverage and pulled on the rope. The mine lifted free of the grenade — and failed to explode on cue. "Keep pulling," urged the deminers. Then the grenade suddenly went off, and the Afghans were suitably impressed.

A graphic, albeit fictional, example of this kind of nasty trickery is seen in the movie "The Beast," where a Soviet tank gets lost in Afghanistan and is relentlessly tracked down by a group of muj bent on revenge for the destruction of their village. In this case a grenade is used to boobytrap a dud tank round jettisoned to delay the pursuit of the muj.

Mine clearing by grappling-iron is not a sophisticated technique but it works. I've seen it field tested under combat conditions in Afghanistan. It was during the siege of Peshgur in the Panjsher Valley during my first trip inside in 1984. We were on a mountaintop preparing to take a post with the usual mine-field defense perimeter, and Massoud himself was throwing a grappling-iron to demonstrate to the assault team how a safe passage through the mines could be cleared with a raking technique.

Although Massoud actually failed to take

the post that day his mine-clearing technique was sound; the assault teams had worked their way within striking distance but were forced back because of poor covering fire.

Very poor quality "mine-detectors" are also field-demonstrated to the trainees during these sessions, although the foreign instructors are derisive about their usefulness. "They're next to fucking useless," griped one Australian. "About all the trainee learns is that there is a machine that can detect metal." Not much advantage when many of the mines are made from plastic.

The big bangs come on the live firing range where the trainees get practical experience with the explosives they will use to dispose of mines in Afghanistan. Here they get to put hours of classroom drilling

OPERATION SALAM

Organized by Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, UN Coordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Aid to Afghanistan, Operation Salam officially began on 14 February 1990 with a three-day "mine awareness" course. The objective was to instruct a maximum number of Afghans to identify commonly found mines. On 28 February the first mine-clearance training course started. Each course lasts two weeks and covers mine identification, clearance procedures and basic first aid.



At any one time 100 foreign mine-clearance specialists are on secondment to the program. Each national team has a specific contract with the United Nations, which provides all equipment for the trainers. The program is staffed by Americans, French, Turks, Canadians, Italians, Norwegians, New Zealanders and Egyptians.

The 5th Special Forces Group stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, provided 40 soldiers for the first training course, which they taught in Pushto. According to Special Forces spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Don Gersh of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the training has been very successful so far. Each Special Forces rotation lasts six months, and there has been a continuous 5th Special Forces presence at the training camps since the program began.

— S. Max

to the test, a critical moment in the course because a mistake could cost lives, not only their own but also the instructor, who must stand watch over every move the trainees make.

On range days several teams gather at the desert ground that meanders through decrepit cemeteries as if offering grim warning on the fate of a fuck-up. Although there is a standardized procedure of instruction, in reality minor differences reflecting each foreign contingent's bias are apparent. In general, this is what happens.

Under the supervision of an instructor each member of a 30-man team of trainees takes a turn at cutting a length of fuse, crimping a detonator onto one end, and inserting that end into a stick of Emulite explosive.

Emulite is produced by Pakistan's giant Wah-Nobel ordnance factory near Islamabad, the complex responsible for manufacturing, among other items, 7.62mm G3 assault rifles, 40mm HEAT RPG rounds and (under license) Chinese 12.7mm heavy machine guns. Emulite is a high explosive plastique. "It can cut steel, do all sorts of things if you shape it right," confessed one U.S. Special Forces deminer. "But the Afghans are not taught this. All they're ever taught is to use it in its stick form."

During this time an independent foreign sapper monitors the abilities of the trainees to assess their degree of competence. When all the students have prepared their Emulite, the range controller and safety officer of the day orders them to light the fuse.

As many as 10 Afghan trainees at a time are now standing with time-bombs in their hands. Part of their training is that they should act with calm and deliberation, characteristics which would probably be alien to anybody under those circumstances, let alone a bunch of excitable Afghan tribesmen naturally given to excesses of wild behavior.

The fuse-lit Emulite is then laid in a shallow hole dug in the ground and the trainees walk back to a safe distance. A 30-second wait, then — BANG!

These explosions signal the professional know-how of the Afghans, but not only as potential deminers. Couldn't the knowledge gained here be used for terrorist or other unsavory purposes? Or even for the military advantage of the mujahideen?

"True, all you have to do is tie a few nails around the explosive and you have a simple fragmentation bomb," admitted one of the deminers candidly. But the officially sanctioned answer to such an inquiry from a visiting journalist is this: "Each trainee takes an oath to use his newly acquired skills only for humanitarian purposes. The aim of this program is to save innocent lives and to provide for the safe rehabilitation of Afghanistan once the hostilities cease."

Sensitive Questions

The sensitivity about the answers to such questions is understandable in light of Kabul regime charges that Pakistan is

interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the training camp outside Peshawar at Risalpur is run by the Pakistani army and most of the interpreters there are army personnel.

Deminers are also cautioned against answering questions relating to social issues such as the impact of refugees in Pakistan, or questions of a political or military nature relating to Afghanistan. And should a pesky news-hound ask — Is the Soviet Union cooperating with the program? — the “suggested reply” is: “I don’t know,” or “I heard that discussions were taking place, however I have no knowledge of any Soviet support or assistance being provided thus far.”

If Operation Salam continues according to plan, however, Kabul will soon have less excuse to bitch about interference in its affairs. While the first teams of foreign deminers concentrated on mine awareness and mine-clearing training courses, the current emphasis is on training the Afghans to train themselves so that eventually all foreign-nation training teams can be phased out.

The system works like this. Selected graduates from the basic mine-clearing training course are invited to serve as assistants to foreign deminers for two terms, then undergo a new 15-day course — the instructor course — which, if passed, qualifies them as probationary instructors. After two terms on probation working with foreign instructors, a grand total of six terms or three months training, they are ready to go it alone.

To complement the instructor course a team leader course was introduced in late 1989 and run by the New Zealanders. The aim of this course is to place the most responsible of the Afghan graduates at the head of each team returning to Afghanistan. “Candidates are supposed to show leadership qualities,” said Kiwi instructor Staff Sergeant Fred Estall of the Royal New Zealand Engineers, “but in reality the criterion here is the ability to read and write.”

No one can be sure what motivates an Afghan to accept this kind of training but foreign instructors note that United Nations-defined pay scales are very attractive to the trainees, so much so that in some cases students will deliberately fail the course in order to repeat and thereby prolong the payment period. Others deviously adopt a disguise in an attempt to repeat the course under an assumed identity.

Trainees get paid Rs30 a day (U.S.\$1.20) plus meals and lodging. Probationary instructors get paid Rs3500 a month, full instructors Rs4000. These sums may sound trifling to us but are generous by local standards. Certainly there are now more applicants for the mine clearing course than Risalpur can handle — 240 were turned away last December.

MINE FACTS

MON-50/-100/-200 directional antipersonnel mine. Soviet equivalent of American claymore. Triggered by remote control via electronic influence system or by a tripwire. Main wounding mechanism is steel fragments embedded in plastic matrix on front surface of mine. MON-50,-100/-200 weigh 2kg, 5kg, and 25kg and have lethal ranges of 50m, 100m and 200m.



PMN antipersonnel mine. Soviet mine developed after World War II. When pressure is applied to top of case, spring-loaded striker is released, which hits a percussion cap that sets off main TNT charge. Weight: 600g; diameter 112 mm; height: 56 mm. Improved version is PMN-2. More difficult to neutralize than PMN because of more sensitive firing mechanism and primer charge. Neutralization usually by destruction.



PFM-1 antipersonnel mine. Soviet small air-delivered plastic weapon with 35-40 grams of liquid explosive. Called “Green Parrot” by Afghans. Designed to maim, not kill. Has arming delay so weapon isn’t armed until after it is on ground, thereafter any handling will set off. Weight: 70g; width over wings: 112mm; height: 60mm.



PP-Mi-Sr bounding antipersonnel mine. Czechoslovakian. Central fuze-well with transit cap. Space between inner and outer walls of mine body filled with shrapnel with fragmentation radius of 20 meters. Weight: 3.2kg; diameter: 102mm; height: 152mm.



Mine awareness and clearance training programs are also being run at Quetta, provincial capital of Baluchistan and a center for Afghan refugees. Operation Salam personnel seem confident that the combined efforts of Peshawar and Quetta will meet the UN goal of 15,000 trained Afghan deminers by August 1990.

Sadly, very little of this important training has so far been put to effect in Afghanistan. Of the 5,500 trained Afghan



Probing techniques trainee blows dust away after locating buried mine with steel probe.

deminers as of January 1990, only one team of 27 has crossed the border, beginning work in the mujahideen-liberated province of Kunar. United Nations Operation Salam personnel are strictly prohibited from entering Afghanistan.

Private Criticism

Privately, some deminers express criticism of the way UN Operation Salam is run, pointing out that no provision has been made to provide a financial incentive for the Afghan deminers to go to work inside Afghanistan. In short they weren’t going to be paid.

While this seems a critical reflection on the mercenary habits of the Afghans it is not unreasonable for them to expect at least the continuation of their training stipend if they have to face the dangers of minefields every day.

In fact some privately funded volunteer organizations are already operating their

own mine-clearing ops inside Afghanistan using paid Afghans under foreign supervision.

Meanwhile, there are some other programs being run in association with Operation Salam in Pakistan that are also attempting to minimize the potential harvest from the seeds of death sown liberally in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society runs a first-aid course which is an integral part of Operation Salam. Trainees are taught to cope with minor cuts and wounds as well as how to stabilize traumatic limb injury such as a blown foot or leg. The idea is to prepare serious casualties for evacuation to proper medical facilities (should they exist).

An interesting program run by U.S. Agency for International Development was the introduction of dog-teams from Thailand especially trained to sniff out mines. The dogs are supposed to work in concert with deminers in Afghanistan. The Thais kept their training secrets to themselves however — locals were instructed in handling experienced sniffer dogs, not how to train their own teams.

One of the many programs run by the volunteer organization, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), is a mine awareness program for Afghans in the refugee camps, in particular women and children. Special visual aids have been printed to reinforce the lessons on the dangers of mines and UXO. These include silkscreen hangings, posters and even handkerchiefs.

If the deminers find their professional duties tedious at times, they receive precious little reprieve when off-duty and searching for recreation in Peshawar. Due to the restrictions imposed by a strict Muslim society it is impossible to cool out with a quiet beer downtown; men and women (who are anyway hidden under traditional tent-like veils) lead segregated lives in public and can’t sit next to each

Continued on page 79

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'NAM DOORGUNNER

Heat of Battle Turns Silver Star to Bronze

by Lionel Dela Rosa as told to Nancy Poole



AT 2,000 feet above the Vietnamese jungle the air was cool and fresh, not like the heat and humidity at Pleiku in the central highlands. From my seat on the right side of the Huey-D the view was fantastic. Below us large plains haphazardly interrupted lush forests — more like the heavily wooded areas at home than what I call jungle. Rivers embellished with spectacular rapids and waterfalls interlaced the panorama. It was easy to forget why we were flying west toward the Cambodian border.

It was March 1966. I'd been in the Army 12 years and had just turned 30 — an old man for 'Nam. An old man and a doorgunner! I had the primary MOS of a missile-man when I volunteered for 'Nam. They didn't need that MOS, so I volunteered as a doorgunner. The statistical life expectancy of a doorgunner was only three months, but I liked to fly. And there was flight pay and combat pay.

This time we were headed west because intelligence had reported a division of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars near the border. The plan: locate, chase, eliminate. But I knew we'd wait for the advantage — let the bastards get out of the jungle into the open, and then blow them to hell.

So far, I'd had it my way — shoot at the enemy without the enemy shooting back, but this mission felt different.

Our chase ship's crew was Captain Roger Peterson, Army pilot, Capt. Steve Miller, Air Force Liaison co-pilot, Specialist 5 Jim Carey, the crew chief and myself. (Names are fictitious in order to protect the privacy of actual crew members.)

A scout team had already engaged the enemy near the border, at Chu Pong. Four Huey helicopters — called slicks by the infantry — were a few minutes behind us carrying in Blues from A-troop. These slicks were virtually unarmed so that they could carry up to 10 grunts. Assignment: air assault and ground reconnaissance.

When the choppers were able to find a clearing, great. They'd land at the same time, drop off troops as if they were trucks, leave and come back later for pick-up and evacuation of the wounded. But when there was no place to land, it was not so much fun. No place to land meant rappelling troops in and STABO-ing them out.

The Blues

The Blues became a living target in hell. Their survival depended on firing nonstop while they were dangled from ropes and dragged through tree branches, waiting to be pulled into the choppers. And the process was slow. It always took more than one trip to complete the pick-up. I'd heard

Troops of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cav go on a search mission during Operation Thayer II. The innovative and massive use of choppers allowed the Army to take the war to an elusive enemy. Photo: U.S. Army, courtesy of J. D. Coleman



A 1st Cav radioman runs across LZ under sniper fire as others drag wounded GI to Huey during battle in Ia Drang Valley. Photo: AP/Wide World

about the in/out-by-rope technique but had never experienced it.

It's not hard to see why Blues, the infantry platoon of the First/Ninth, were legend. They came into hot zones under fire, outnumbered 20-1; they maintained contact with the enemy until relieved by other infantry; they all — officers, sergeants, privates — got old fast ... if they lived.

Close to the Cambodian border, the terrain looked different. Bomb craters were everywhere like pockmarks on diseased skin. Our destination was a heavily wooded area, with a high, rocky mountain at the north end.

Scout choppers and their gunship escort had been firing intermittently at suspected targets. We hovered in a counterattack circle. Choppers carrying the Blues were behind us.

This wouldn't be easy. Couldn't say why, but I felt it in the gut. Gunships were prepping the area with rocket and machine-gun fire. The command ship and our chase chopper escorted the slicks carrying Blues, by dropping fragmentation grenades and firing machine guns straight down at the tree line about 100 yards to each side of the road. Blues landed, jumped fast from the skids and took cover.

I was on the high side as we were banking. To see anything except sky, I dropped prone to the floor and leaned out, firing under the helicopter's belly — rotten, but better than going down with a ship because I couldn't see to fire.

Double Surprise

We'd caught these gooks by surprise and it looked like they were in a panic. Then it came abruptly over the radio: "NVA captured. Scout interrogating." And later: "POW says a whole division's down there

surrounding the Blues." Still later we heard that the POW had reported over 1,000 enemy regulars in the area. NVA were covering the woods like maggots on a dead body — way too many for the Blues down there, even with aerial support.

"Get them out!" the colonel radioed from the lead ship ahead of us to the four slicks that had dropped off the Blues.

The transport ships turned around instantly and formed a landing pattern, with



The 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry served as the recon cav squadron of the 1st Cav Division (Airmobile) in Vietnam from 15 September 1965, to 28 June 1971. This action took place near the Chu Pong Massif in the center of II Corps.



H-13 scout helicopter of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry. Smaller than the Hueys, scout choppers were often used for extractions where others could not go. Photo: J. D. Coleman

Blues on the ground running top speed to jump aboard as fast as possible. I'd heard the colonel radio the recall but couldn't see the choppers approach or land from where I was sitting, on the opposite side of the action. Throwing my ceramic chestplate on the floor, I sat on top of it and grabbed a box of grenades and a supply of rifle magazines.

Choppers Down

As suddenly as an explosion all hell broke loose. I heard a shout — "They're taking fire from the tree line!" Gunships went into a steep dive, firing what little ammo they had left, to cover Blues on the ground who were climbing into the slicks that had landed for pick-up. Two of the ships on the ground were hit immediately and caught fire; two others were attempting to load the surviving Blues.

Following the command ship, Peterson put us into a nose dive that introduced my stomach to my brain. Knowing my rifle would be useless, I grabbed the grenade box and, having run out of regular grenades, threw white phosphorous (WP) grenades to provide covering smoke and distract the enemy — so frantically that I didn't even take them all out of their containers, just pulling the pins and dumping them, hoping they would fall free on impact and ignite.

We went into a climb and I glanced back over my shoulder. The grounded choppers were receiving fire from all sides. Two were burning and two others were trying to take off, their doorgunners wildly shooting at the tree line. Tracers were spewing out all over the place.

One of the ships trying to take off was in serious trouble. Since the pilot was dead and the co-pilot had been badly wounded, a crew chief had jumped into the pilot seat. With hydraulics shot, he was nevertheless

flying the ship out.

The command ship maneuvered fast to escort the damaged ship to safety, while we banked back to cover the second ship that was taking off. By that time the two other grounded Hueys were engulfed in flames, bodies scattered everywhere — death on the ground, death inside the burning ships.

Gradually, the battle/death stench faded from my nostrils and the air cleared, as we followed the second wounded ship away from the clearing.

In front of us, I could see the second ship trailing a thin line of smoke while behind us, ugly billows of smoke rolling skyward

from the battle scene. Observation choppers flying at tree-top level like angry bees and their gunships like hawks waiting for prey were still engaging the enemy.

"He's not going to make it."

"He's losing power."

"He's going down."

Peterson and Miller were talking about the second ship, their voices heavy with helplessness.

The pilot tried to find a decent place to land but lost control, flared out and crash-landed in an extremely small area. Making any landing at all was a miracle, since the chopper's rotors had cleared surrounding trees by mere inches. The ship was tilted sharply to one side and bodies were scattered where they'd fallen off — but we could tell there were survivors.

Chase Chopper Rescues

"Sir, there's a clearing about 100 yards from the chopper; you can drop me off there and maybe I can help." Peterson vetoed my offer to go it alone but decided that the three of us, Miller, Carey and myself, could go down while he provided cover.

Peterson hovered over the clearing. After the other two jumped, I grabbed my rifle and headed for the ship's skids. But I never got to the ground. My M16 stopped in mid-air while I held onto it desperately, trying to figure out what the hell was going on. Dangling several feet from land with my rifle still attached to the chopper, I might as well have been wearing a sign that said "shoot me!"

Then I remembered. When we were still in the air, I'd tied my M16 to the ship's floor with a sling so it wouldn't fall out; but I'd forgotten to untie it before jumping.

I let go of the rifle and landed hard on my back. Painfully struggling to my feet, I

The highlands near Plei Me Special Forces camp — a typical air landing in the difficult terrain near Chu Pong Massif. Waist-high plateau grass often provided excellent cover for NVA soldiers. Photo: U.S. Army, courtesy of J. D. Coleman



grabbed the sling and removed my rifle.

Dazed from the fall, the noise of the hovering chopper and the dirt flying from the rotors, I couldn't see Miller and Carey who were already on the ground, much less make out anything else. I shouted up to Peterson who was hovering, "Where the hell do I go?" He pointed the way and I headed for a small clearing where the crashed helicopter had landed.

Like they were at a Sunday afternoon church picnic, Miller and Carey were standing around chatting casually with two of the ship's crew. They were frozen — emotionally paralyzed against dealing with a scene that was horrible.

Doorgunner Medic

Anger welled inside me. I could understand their reaction. Nine men had just crashed into hell. Some were wounded as they lifted off, others had been thrown out of the ship under fire. But there was no time to stand around in a cluster of wounded troops who desperately needed help. Driven by rage, I began moving the wounded away from the ship in case it exploded, then cut jungle fatigues with my bayonet, opened and dressed wounds. There was no time to think. We had to get these guys to safety. Out of bandages, I shouted for someone to bring me the ship's first aid kit, but Miller and Carey were still frozen.

"There's one on the other side of the ship!" I yelled. "Check him out!"

Finally, I got an answer. "Forget it — he's dead."

"No, he's not!" I screamed back, rage boiling in my veins. "He's groaning — take care of him, for God's sake. I'm busy over here!" Finally one of them snapped out of it and took care of the last of the nine wounded Blues. This left just the POW, who had fallen out of the chopper. Only his leg was injured and I was too busy taking care of the others to deal with him, too.

Exhausted and covered with blood, I blindly grabbed the emergency radio hanging around my neck and radioed Peterson for help. But he never got my message. I had pushed the switch in the wrong direction, sending out instead an extreme emergency distress signal that was heard all the way to Saigon.

Later I found out that every available plane had been scrambled to come to our rescue. Sure enough, we got our support.

My error had not really been a mistake. This did classify as an emergency situation — and in emergencies U.S. forces in Vietnam traditionally formed a brotherhood for military action against the enemy.

I tossed the radio to Miller who managed to reach Peterson. We carried wounded Blues to the clearing for evacuation. They were all disoriented — first confused by the NVA crossfire from the tree line, and then they had crashed in the same damned place after take-off. Some of them resisted me, making the 100 yards to the clearing seem like 100 miles.

As soon as Miller, Carey and I hit the

ground, Peterson in the chase chopper had circled to make sure we were OK, and then left.

But two observation ships came back and actually managed to land in this impossible place. I never figured out how they did it. Peterson wasn't able to land when he had dropped us off — which is why we had jumped from the skids. But these guys were something else. You had to be a little crazy and a lot tough to be an Army combat chopper pilot in Vietnam.

Staged Rescue

One of the ships took off with a load of the wounded but the other stayed. For a second I glanced up at the POW and saw one of the observation ship's crew bashing in the prisoner's head.

"Knock it off! We need him alive," I shouted, understanding his hate — these were his buddies who had been killed or wounded and were splattered all over the clearing. He stopped.

I couldn't get anyone to help me with the POW and our Vietnamese interpreter, so I put the interpreter on my back. By now I was drenched with blood. He was hurting from a broken leg which I tried to keep from moving too much, and was hitting me because he was hurt.

"Christ, help me," I yelled at the guys who were standing in the clearing. They helped me, all right. Filled with hatred, they violently threw the Vietnamese interpreter into the helicopter while he howled in excruciating pain — he was our interpreter — but eyes blinded by hatred only saw a gook.

Wounded aboard, the chopper took off, leaving the POW and a few other wounded behind. We still had no protection and the place was on fire. I knew "Charlie" was nearby. It was getting dark. I leaned against a tree at the edge of the clearing with my M16, making sure we had some cover.

But I didn't expect or recognize the loud, crackling noise that abruptly ripped through the jungle like a shock wave. I swung around just in time to see a huge tree falling on top of me. I jumped out of the tree's path and watched it crash, exactly where I'd been standing. A smoldering fire caused by some earlier attack had eventually eaten away the trunk.

A second chopper picked up the rest of the survivors, except Miller the Air Force liaison pilot, the POW and myself. It was dark. I began to wonder if we'd be picked up at all or have to walk out. In the jungle, daylight faded quickly, and with it hope. Miller had a .45 and I had an M16 and a canteen. We stood there, talking softly.

"Everybody's gone — now what? Only two straw hats left." This was the unspoken thought in both our minds.

Miller began talking into the radio.

Finally we heard it — the beautiful sound of an observation chopper hovering overhead, but there was room for only one of us.

"Well what are you waiting for? Get aboard!" Miller looked at me, hard.

"No, sir," I responded. "You're the liaison officer. You're supposed to get out of here. I've got my rifle — I stand a chance."

Miller responded quickly in the form of a command. "We're not going to argue about this; you're getting aboard. Understand? That's an order! There should be another chopper coming in soon."

"Want to Shoot a Gook?"

This helicopter was unable to land. I climbed on top of the tree trunk that had nearly killed me, grabbed the skids and wearily pulled myself inside.

"Want to shoot a gook?" the pilot yelled over his shoulder. I was covered with blood and dirt, filled with hate and frustration, tired, sore.

"Hell, yes! Where?" The pilot pointed down at our POW. Instinctively, I shot. Miller and the POW were picked up the next day, alive. I eventually made it back to my crew at Plei Me.

Silver Star?

"Well, Del, guess what? You're getting the Silver Star!" Bryant always knew everything before it happened. "Whee," I was thinking. "I couldn't care less. Just get me home." I looked up absentmindedly from my book. "For what?"

"For what you did the other day. But there's gonna be a catch."

"Oh?" I paid more attention. "OK, Bryant, what's the catch?"

"Well, they'll give you the Silver Star — but they'll also give you a court-martial."

"A court-martial! What the hell for?" This had to be some kind of sick joke.

It wasn't. I had shot a POW, which was a violation of the Geneva Convention.

"He's not dead, for God's sake! It was only a shoulder wound. So why a court-martial?"

"Yeah, hawkeye, you missed. Well, anyhow, you're not *exactly* going to get a court-martial," Bryant continued. "They'll drop the charges if you take the Bronze Star instead."

"They don't have to give me a damned thing, Bryant," I snapped. "But I don't want a court-martial."

"Well in that case, congratulations, Del. They'll give you the Bronze Star — but you're not going to get the Silver Star."

"Fine, great, Bryant. You work it out. Whatever. But no court-martial and I want to go home."

A crazy twist in a crazy war. One medal instead of another as a trade for not being court-martialed, when all that mattered to me was *being alive*. So this was another Bronze Star to go with two others, a Purple Heart and 15 Air Medals I had received by 1970, at the end of another 12-month tour in Vietnam.

I was a doorgunner and I had survived. Statistics aren't always right.

Lionel Dela Rosa survived two tours in Vietnam to retire as an E-7. Nancy Poole is a freelance writer based in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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BATTLE OF CITIES

Continued from page 53

retake the barrio in a couple of days.

At the Brother Asis medical clinic, the army captured 160,000 rounds of 7.62 NATO ammunition manufactured in Argentina, according to a U.S. military observer. "I don't know how the guerrillas got it, but this was just a fraction of all the armament the army captured," he said.

From the beginning of the offensive to the end of December, the armed forces claimed to have captured 2,300 rifles — mostly Kalashnikovs — 25 surface-to-air missiles, 275 grenade launchers, 59 mortars, 134 machine guns, 435 pistols and a huge quantity of ammunition and explosives.

Next came Cuscantancingo district. "This was the place the security forces learned their lessons in urban combat," said a U.S. military observer. "The local police station was captured but the police retook it two days later. Unfortunately they didn't secure every house and the guerrillas came back to retake the station. Then the army came in to take back the station for good, being sure to secure the houses."

Atlatcatl battalion and the cavalry pushed on to assist the National Police in the district of Ciudad Delgado. A hellacious battle ensued in the municipal street market. Perhaps enraged at their failure to rally the masses to their cause, the guerrillas set fire to some of the market's abandoned stalls and stripped the foundations to make barricades. It was to no avail: the security forces pushed the guerrillas back to their command post in a cemetery and routed them tombstone to tombstone with the support of helicopter gunships.

Soyapango, on the eastern edge of the capital, was the last municipality where the armed forces cleared the guerrillas' original battle lines. The guerrillas fought tooth-and-nail, resorting to hurling blocks of TNT with lit fuses at paratroopers. But, as in the other barrios reoccupied by the armed forces, the rebels couldn't withstand the sheer force of the government counterattack.

"The support and information given to us by the civilian population were crucial to us in defeating the terrorists last November," underlined Major Rene Hurtado, commander of the Salvadoran paratroopers.

The fighting was far from over, though. Guerrilla harassment plagued the northern barrios and Soyapango for days. And the FMLN used mobility very effectively to take their terror to the homes of the wealthy in the posh colony of Escalon and attack the police academy on the western edge of the capital. A U.S. military attache I spoke with believes the FMLN presence in Escalon was between 25 and 50 guerrillas whose mobility and daring created the impression of greater numerical strength.

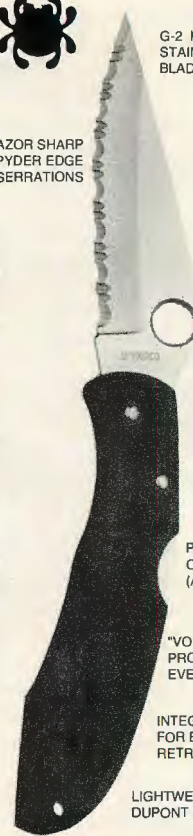
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However, journalists who made contact with the guerrillas in a ravine running through the colony claimed there could have been as many as 300.

Diplomats Trapped in Sheraton Hotel

Whatever the number of guerrillas involved, the FMLN retook the initiative. On 21 November, an FMLN commando squad of about 20 men penetrated the VIP building of the Sheraton Hotel, in the heart of Escalon, in an apparent attempt to take hostage the secretary general of the Organization of American States, who arrived two days earlier to try to mediate an end to the bloodshed. The rebels failed to do this but they trapped diplomats of several countries and a dozen U.S. Special Forces troops. The United States was on the verge of its first direct military intervention in El Salvador when President Bush ordered Delta Force on standby for a possible rescue mission. But the standoff was settled in a day or two when the guerrillas were allowed to retreat, abandoning the foreigners unharmed.

Their bold foray made world headlines and gave the impression the guerrillas could strike almost anywhere with impunity. This impression was reinforced when guerrilla units burned facilities of the Central Council of Elections and a recreation club in Escalon during the Sheraton incident and occupied houses there as well as in adjacent elegant neighborhoods at the end of November.

They took a few foreigners hostage overnight, including some Americans. An American teacher was reportedly locked in a closet. But the guerrillas released them unharmed. On 30 November, fearing the worst, the U.S. embassy arranged the evacuation of about 200 Americans.

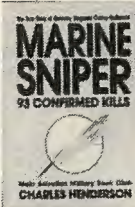
The FMLN didn't treat their own countrymen as well as they treated the foreigners. On 28 November, its urban commandos gunned down the former president of the Salvadoran Supreme Court. A day later, the guerrillas took prisoner five journalists of a local TV company, burned their offices and later called a TV station claiming to have executed five "security agents" they captured there. Five burned bodies were later dug up from a common, shallow grave. It was reported that a ring, keychain and I.D. card belonging to one of the journalists was found on one of the bodies.

However, this and other FMLN atrocities received scant attention in international news coverage. This was in stark contrast to the world condemnation of the 16 November slaughter of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her young daughter, allegedly by three army officers and five enlisted men of the Atlacatl battalion on the orders of the director of the military academy, Col. Guillermo Benavides Moreno. All are now under arrest and awaiting trial. The massacre roused demands to cut U.S. support to the Salvadoran government and eclipsed the fact that the armed forces' successful

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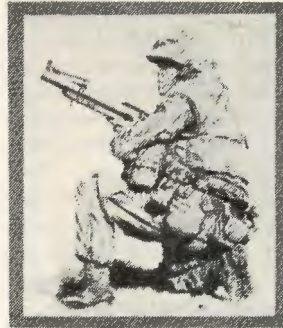


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defense of San Salvador and other major cities had held the civilian casualty toll to around 250 dead and a few hundred wounded, according to an American embassy survey of hospitals between 11 November and 30 November.

The FMLN's exploits in Escalon could not stop the inexorable tailspin of its offensive. By the beginning of December, the FMLN "strategic offensive" had petered out and El Salvador's cities returned to their pre-offensive state of sporadic urban terrorism. Most of the guerrillas who survived and were not captured had fled to the countryside.

No Military Solution

What did the FMLN offensive accomplish? The Salvadoran armed forces were not able to deliver a knockout blow to their enemy, but all tangible indicators underscored a clear battlefield triumph for the government forces. The guerrillas suffered heavy casualties, could not take a single important military installation and failed to ignite a government-toppling popular uprising that captured rebel documents indicated they were expecting.

FMLN propaganda aimed at converting their military defeat into a Tet-style political victory failed. The Salvadoran media, censored throughout the most critical days of the offensive, highlighted the armed forces' prowess. And many U.S. news organizations serving a readership considerably more conservative than during the Vietnam era emphasized the FMLN's failure to spur popular insurrection and its loss of touch with the vast majority of Salvadorans, though noting the guerrilla show of military strength. *New York Times* correspondent Lindsey Gruson wrote on 26 November that during the fighting in Soyapango "workers stayed at their posts in a shoe factory caught in the crossfire. Evidently they saw steady jobs as offering a better future than revolution."

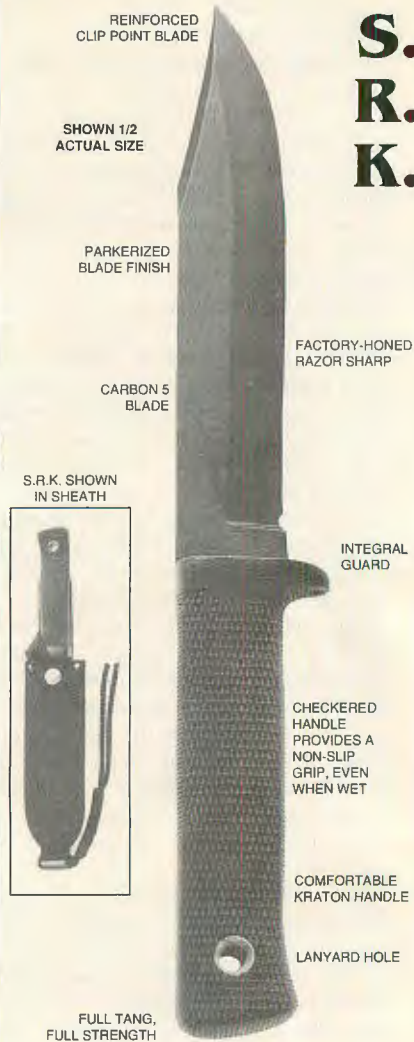
It definitely seems that the insurrection proved that there will not be a military solution to the problems of El Salvador.

Summing up the sentiments of many of his countrymen, schoolteacher Carlos Sandoval of the Zacamil barrio stated, "Although (the guerrillas) didn't receive the support they hoped for, they can enter (the capital) as many times as they wish. That's clear. This war is going to continue until they lay down their weapons."

According to Ruben Zamora, leader of the Social Christian Popular Movement and official spokesman for the Democratic Revolutionary Front, the FMLN's political arm, one of the great lessons of the offensive is, "There is not a military exit to this conflict. The army demonstrated that it cannot defeat the guerrillas and that it has a strong guerrilla movement to contend with. But, on the other hand, it was demonstrated to the guerrillas that there aren't possibilities of insurrection because the masses, the townspeople, do not have an attitude of insurrection. Therefore, there aren't possibilities that the guerrillas defeat

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the army. I believe the only rational, and realistic, alternative we have at this moment, is through negotiation. There has to be a negotiated political solution."

According to the auxiliary bishop of the Catholic church in San Salvador, Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chaves, the war in El Salvador is in its final stage. "I don't dare to say how many months this journey will take," he was quoted in an Agence France Press dispatch dated 23 April, "but what's important is everything indicates that the war now doesn't have a future."

Salvadorans pray the bishop is right. Correspondent Steve Salisbury has covered Central America's conflicts for the last nine years, frequently going under fire in search of stories for SOF.

COMBAT CRAFT

Continued from page 20

Another large jungle animal is the tapir or danto. Although they travel alone, they weigh between 400 and 800 pounds, and just one animal is worthwhile. They can be hunted under fruit trees at night or they can be stalked while they cool off in a waterhole. They are not a particularly crafty animal but they are tough and hard to kill. If you're using a shotgun, get close! A solid neck shot will usually put them down.

Jungle birds offer some of the finest eating. Wild turkeys live in Central America and the currasow and guan families of birds inhabit all forest areas in Central and South America. Turkey, currasow and guan all make mating calls in the spring and can be stalked. Also, early in the morning or late in the evening, birds feed on fruit trees where they can be ambushed. Even a large group of men can walk into (under) a group of birds high in the canopy. One or two of the large birds will usually spook and fly from one branch to the next and you will hear that tell-tale whoa-whoa-whoa of their wings flapping. Generally, they feel safe in the canopy and will not all fly away at once. It is then a matter of the men spreading out and looking up. Many times several of the big birds can be taken before the group disappears. A male currasow can dress out 6-8 pounds, a guan 4-5 pounds.

All large parrots are good to eat, as is the tinamou. There are several species of tinamou — partridge-sized, ground-dwelling birds commonly seen along jungle trails. A concealed man can call them in close by imitating their whistle. Parrots can be heard from far away and stalked.

Brocket deer inhabit the deep jungles, and there are white-tailed deer on the edges. They are both small, crafty animals and cannot be relied on for feeding large groups of men. Hunt them


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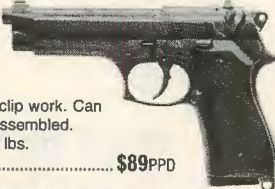
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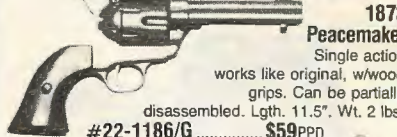
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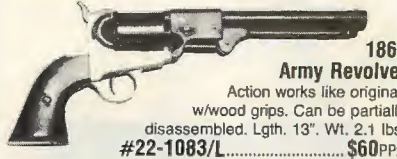
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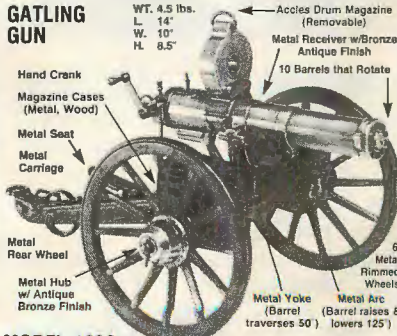
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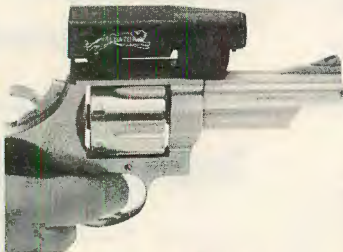
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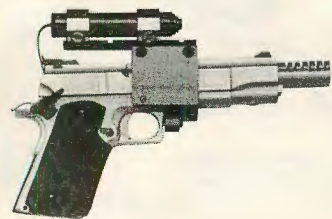
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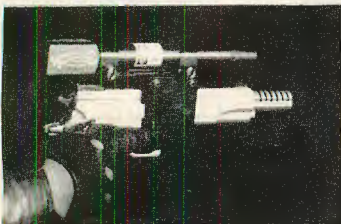
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The most notable of the small game animals is the gibbon, mentioned above. This 25-pound rodent feeds at night under fruit and nut trees. Their sign can easily be detected and an ambush set up. The gibbon is not large but is one of the best-tasting animals there is. They have very juicy light and dark meat. Their large nocturnal eyes light up like truck headlights when spotted in the trees with a flashlight. They should be scalded with hot water and the hair scraped off. Salted and smoked, their meat is second to none.

Weapons used in jungle hunting are usually whatever one has in his hands. Many times there is no choice, and ammo can be scarce. Given a choice of firearms to use for jungle hunting, I would take a 12 gauge pump with No. 4 buckshot (AAA). Shots taken on jungle game are typically short and quick. No. 4 buck is good for large birds and will stop a peccary cold. Other good jungle hunting weapons are the .30 M1 carbine and the 7.62. As far as the 5.56 goes for jungle hunting, I would say it is strictly for the birds.

One of the best survival weapons for the jungle (or anywhere) is a good semiautomatic .22 pistol. They are accurate, make little noise, and ruin little meat. A .22 pistol can be used to take small birds or medium sized game without blowing them to bits. And, in the hands of a cool shot, a .22 can bring down any sized game. A pistol has the advantage of always being on your belt, which means that no matter what happens, it will probably always be with you. A "wonder nine" would probably be one of my last choices for a jungle survival weapon.

The jungles of Latin America are not teeming with game, but a good man with common-sense hunting skills can feed himself.

Be prepared and resourceful. A general knowledge of the jungle and maintaining a constant aggressive awareness of it will help you to stay healthy and fit, and prepared for anything. ⚔

MAVERICK 9MM

Continued from page 23

re-assemble in the reverse order, once again using all four hands to install the slide retainer pin.

If nothing else, the Maverick is extremely bullet-sensitive. It will not chamber cartridges with either lead or FMJ flat-nosed bullets. It will not feed cartridges with Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) bullets with any acceptable degree of reliability. It will function reliably with either lead or FMJ round-nose bullets. This limits its effectiveness as a self-defense weapon.

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Because of its great weight, perceived recoil is moderate. Because of its far too heavy trigger pull weight and pathetic sights, accuracy potential is at best mediocre. Because of its grotesque ergonomics, this is one pistol that most decidedly does not feel comfortable to handle or shoot.

The Maverick Model JS pistol most certainly represents an extreme end on the spectrum of available semiauto handguns. For the price of just one of Walther's exorbitant P-88 double-action whiz bangs (\$1,150), you could equip an entire squad with Mavericks. But, would you want to?

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What other applications can there be for the Maverick? None, in my opinion. It holds no appeal for professional pistoleros, law enforcement personnel, competition shooters or even plinkers. While an inter-

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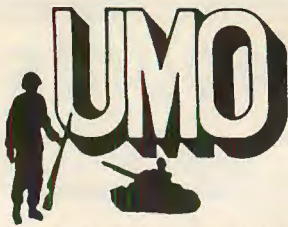
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esting experiment in cost-effectiveness, sometimes you get exactly what you pay for. And the life insurance provided by investment in a Maverick is inadequate coverage. ✕

YELLOW RAIN

Continued from page 47

so far. First, a strange yellow substance has appeared throughout the area.

Second, people have suddenly become ill and three children have died, after being in situations where they would have inhaled or ingested the substance. Reports from the Nan hospital confirm that the people taken there are suffering the effects of some sort of toxin. The initial Nan hospital lab test on the substance itself shows it to be a mycotoxin of unknown origin, which is not native to the region.

Three, the substance is appearing in a resistance base area presently under attack by the LPA. From 1975 to 1981 reports of chemical attacks also emerged from hard-to-crack resistance areas. Since 1988 the Nam Pouy zone has successfully defeated numerous LPA attempts to take it. It should be noted that none of this substance has appeared in the former LUF area of Nam Lop, which fell easily to the LPA and is now occupied by them, nor are there reports of it in government-secured areas.

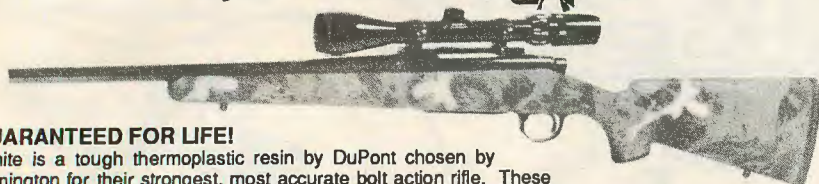
What is needed now is a technical team to conduct an on-site investigation as soon as possible. The traces collected from the Nam Pouy area have been turned over to Thai and presumably also to U.S. authorities, but so far no serious investigative effort has been launched. How much longer the substance will continue to appear and how long the collected samples will be of any use to investigators for analysis is uncertain.

In the past, resistance groups reported the chemical agents were delivered directly on the targets in the interior of Laos by aircraft and artillery, in a deadlier, more-concentrated form. The objective in such a scenario would be to wipe out all life in the target area — to immediately kill the guerrillas and the people supporting them.

Using such an agent on the Thai border would require much more discretion. There it would have to be employed in less-concentrated form, which, although not always deadly, would make people quite sick. The objective then would be not so much to kill the opposition as to weaken them and make their base area uninhabitable. The guerrillas and their supporters would then either have to evacuate or have their strength so severely sapped that resistance to future LPA attacks would be ineffective.

Certainly, all indications point to a resolve by the Vientiane regime to crush the resistance in north and central Laos by the end of the dry season in May or June. At

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this writing the LPA has a force of 100 engineers with two dozers, one grader and one front-end loader cutting a road into the LPA position at Ban Na Van (about 12km west of the Nam Pouy zone). The projected completion of this route in about a month will allow the LPA to bring artillery within range of the ELOL base area. More government troops are also expected to be brought up for the continuing drive against this base area.

In other ELOL zones the situation also remains critical. In Long Yen/Long Pot (about 150km north of Vientiane) the LPA has occupied all villages in that base area after a series of combined ground-and-air assaults by Mi-8 helicopters supported by MiG-21 strikes. Chemical attacks have also been reported in this zone.

Other LPA forces continue to fight and fire on the Phu Bia (about 110km northeast of Vientiane) and Phu Jia base areas (about 180km northwest of the capital). Since late January ELOL has not been able to contact its forces in Khammouane (about 200km northeast of Vientiane) and at Phu Kong Kao (about 150km northwest of Vientiane).

While the ELOL forces are critically short of supplies and weapons they seem to have used what they possess to good effect. ELOL raids and ambushes are filling up Lao hospitals with LPA wounded, according to foreigners returning from Vientiane. The regime has also restricted travel outside Vientiane for diplomatic officials and personnel of international organizations, in an apparent effort to keep a lid on news of the recent round of fighting.

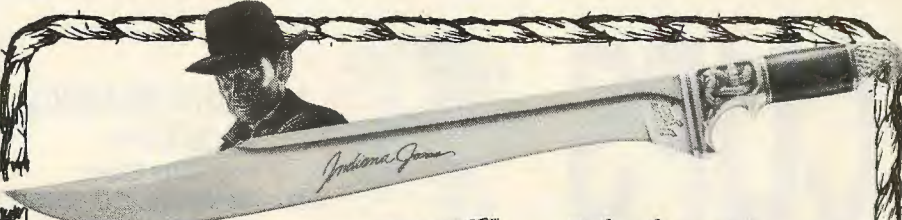
The main difficulties for ELOL interior base areas will likely soon be diminishing ammo and food stocks, and how to feed and care for the up to 6,000 H'mong civilians, forced to flee their villages and now hiding from the LPA.

"The H'mong people are being forced to either flee to Thailand, where we aren't welcomed, or stay in Laos and be killed in the attacks or starve to death," ELOL chief of staff Yang Thao, told us grimly.

Either way, the Vietnamese-backed Lao regime would be rid of its most tenacious and long-standing foes. Behind the vital question of whether chemical/biological weapons are being employed in the Nam Pouy area is the larger question of whether the world will eventually recognize the plight of the H'mongs in their endless struggle for survival. Their fight may be forgotten by most people, but it certainly is not finished.

GASNOST

The brutal employment of indiscriminate, highly toxic chemical/biological agents against defenseless old folks, women and babies by Moscow-supplied communist forces is nothing new. It is what history teaches us to expect from a ruthless and perverse philosophy where the individual has utterly no worth and even the lives of the ruling elite are subject to expedient termination.



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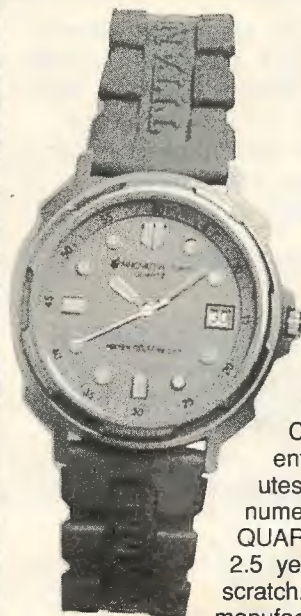
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The U.S. State Department first formally accused the Soviets and their lackeys of using "Yellow Rain" in November 1981. That summer SOF had sent a team to investigate, and on 10 November of that year SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Associate Editor Jim Coyne testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the samples of toxic agents they had collected in Laos — one of four samples of toxic agents from different sources supplied to the State Department that enabled the Deputy Director of Politico-Military Affairs at the State Department to affirm "We now have the smoking gun ... we now have four separate pieces of physical evidence" of lethal-toxin attacks against the people of Laos and Cambodia.

Deputy Director Richard Burt continued "Over the past five years, and perhaps longer, weapons outlawed by mankind, weapons successfully banned from the battlefields of the industrialized world for over five decades, have been used against unsophisticated and defenseless people, in campaigns of mounting extermination which are being conducted in Laos, Cambodia, and more recently in Afghanistan."

Noted Senator Jim Leach (R-Iowa), "Faced with the evidence that the Soviets have not only a capability but also a willingness to use mycotoxin weapons, the United States has only two realistic options. National Security requires that we either upgrade significantly our own chemical arsenal or launch negotiations aimed at definitively eliminating bio-chemical instruments of warfare.

"If legitimized through production, stockpiling and use, chemical and mycotoxin weapons could all too easily become the poor man's weapon of mass destruction. Nuclear arms are beyond the financial or technical capabilities of most nations. However, countries which are unable or unwilling to produce nuclear weapons can easily produce or obtain some types of deadly bio-chemical weapons. If the Soviet Union and its surrogates get away with using such weapons with impunity, the list of other countries willing and able to do likewise will almost certainly grow." Especially with a little help from technical prostitutes from the west, as in the current cases of Libya, Iraq and Iran.

And what is this yellow poison indiscriminately falling from the skies onto combatants, women, children and old people alike? The liberal media poo-pooed (no pun) the idea with the assertion that Yellow Rain is probably just bee feces. Mass defecation flights by swarms of bees is not an unknown phenomenon, of course, but why would bee droppings only kill babies in Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan? And then only in territory held by rebels?


Chemical analysis was difficult. Many samples collected turned out to be only the carrier for the very volatile Mycotoxin T₂ trichloroethene. This toxin is ideal for use

in remote areas against unsophisticated populations, as it goes away without a trace upon exposure to sunlight or humidity. Like a poor-man's neutron bomb, it causes no permanent harm to the real estate — only the unfortunate population. And by the time international health or monitoring agencies get on the scene, there is nothing but rumor for them to investigate.

It was first deployed in Yemen in 1963 by Egypt, then aligned with — and supplied by — the Soviet Union. Mycotoxin T₂ is derived from an obscure grain fungus which in its natural state caused a bizarre hemorrhaging disease that had long plagued Mother Russia. During the mid-70s, reports of chemical attacks began to filter out of Laos with H'mong refugees. Subsequent attacks in Cambodia and Afghanistan seemed to indicate that newer, more exotic experiments were taking place. During the mid-80s, such attacks slacked off in Southeast Asia.

Now that the attacks have resumed in Laos, there seems to be some difference. The symptoms seem to be less severe. There are fewer deaths, except among the very old and very young. Is this a newer, more subtle toxin? Or are the communists merely using it in lesser concentrations for fear of getting into a flap with Thailand? The analysis by the Thai hospital authorities indicating that H'mong freedom fighters and their families in Laos are suffering the effects of a mycotoxin is probably correct. Precisely which one is yet to be determined. We're working on it.

— Don McLean

Tom Peterson is a photojournalist who has traveled extensively throughout Southeast Asia covering forgotten wars for Soldier of Fortune. 

AFGHAN DEMINERS

Continued from page 63

other on a bus for example unless they are married or from the same family; and keen joggers discover that shorts and T-shirts are not acceptable dress (or undress?) in public.

It's a bizarre experience for any Westerner. Add to six hours of instruction at Risalpur an hour-long drive home amidst assorted ox-carts, horse-carts, donkey-carts, camel-carts, not to mention cars, trucks and motorbikes all driving like maniacs in some mad modern chariot race, and you have the formula for a deminer in need of a place to unwind.

Sanctuary is usually found in the large concrete mansions built in that inimitable eclectic Pakistani style that are rented for the deminers' residence during their tour of duty. Here amidst the familiar comforts of privacy, a cold beer and a video, sanity can be restored.

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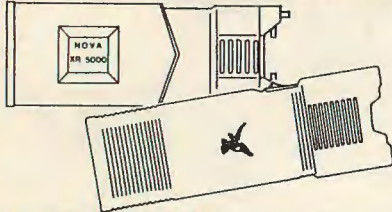
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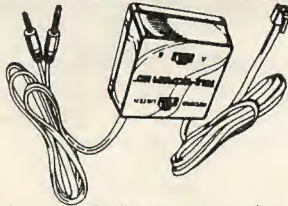
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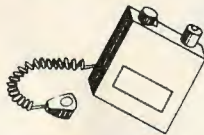
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fashion of the border are not always enough to lock out unwelcome reminders of the deminer's daily work. The sky sometimes rains bullets. How? It is a custom in the tribal areas adjacent to where the deminers live to fire into the air with automatic weapons when celebrating weddings.

When the going gets too tough in Peshawar, final refuge is found in the American Club. This admirable institution is restricted to foreigners only, and is the watering-hole where refugee-relief workers, journalists, diplomats, spooks, English teachers and deminers let their hair down.

Fair steak, good hamburgers, fries and pizza are served in the downstairs restaurant, while upstairs the bar turns on the music, booze and a place for men and women to mingle away from the inquiring eyes of a less accommodating outside world.

The deminers are no strangers to this club, where their discretion and military discipline allows only the minimum of polite conversation about the nature of their work to intrude upon the more serious aspects of socializing — hell-raising and party-making. In this capacity they are universally regarded (as they are in their professional field) as being quite simply — "among the best."

Jake Border is a frequent SOF contributor who has spent many months inside Afghanistan. When he's not in Afghanistan, Border travels all over the Near and Far East, looking for stories for SOF.

PURPLE HEARTS

Continued from page 39

the 26-yard line. "B" Division shooters fired from the 23-yard line, and "C" Division shooters from the 20-yard line. Some of the paralyzed veterans came from as far away as Florida to shoot in this match.

One shooter I became friends with was Brian Shelton of Tucson, Arizona, a former Special Forces trooper. Brian proved to be not only a good shot but good company in the bar after the shoot was over. Brian still presents himself with all the self assuredness of a member of the U.S. Army's elite.

During a break in the shooting, expert exhibition shooter Dan Reeves, who co-hosts ESPN's "Starshoot," gave an incredible demonstration of shotgun and trick shooting. At one point Reeves began shooting aspirin out of the air with a .22. Reeves holds the world's record for consecutive targets shot, 2,312.

As Milius said, none of the PVA shooters asked for any quarter or gave any. Few PVA shooters shot a score of less than 60 for Saturday's round, with many averaging in the upper 80s and 90s. Jim DeKay shot a 97 on Saturday out of a possible 100. Some of the celebrities didn't fare so well, but high shooters among the Hollywood

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crowd included John Milius with a 94, Roy Rogers, Sr., with an 84 and Robert Stack with a 79. In fact, PVA member Jim DeKay beat out Pat Moore as top overall shooter by one target for Saturday's competition.

Some of the sponsors of the shoot included Weatherby Shotguns, Perazzi, Inc., Navy Arms, Olin/Winchester, the NRA and Federal Cartridge Co. All shells and clay pigeons were donated by the California chapter of the PVA.

The presentation of awards was made that evening at the Ranch House Inn in Valencia. John Milius, Robert Stack and actor Peter Sherayko did the honors of handing out everything from a Weatherby shotgun to macadamia nut plants.

If there was a last word on the day novelist Kent Anderson had it. He was overheard saying, "These are a bunch of ballsy right wing guys who just happen to be in wheelchairs." We couldn't agree more. ✕

SEEDS OF INSURGENCY

Continued from page 29

blanketed the kingdom.

As the CPT threat diminished, there were those who began to question the threat this all-encompassing ISOC effort might pose for the fledgling Thai democracy. Indoctrinated mass organizations answering to the commands and agenda of an unselected element of the bureaucracy could, critics charged, easily prove a Frankenstein. Regardless, this orientation continues to the present, though regular security force pronouncements that "this is the way things should be" have heightened popular fears that the men on horseback will once again attempt to ride into power.

Not surprisingly, these fears have centered on the person of Chaovalit, who recently stepped down as army head, only to be named defense minister of Thailand's democratically elected government — the only cabinet official who has not faced the voters. Since he has made no secret of his desire to become prime minister, the retired general has prompted concern that the kingdom is sliding back into the pattern of military rule it thought it had left behind.

This of course would be the ultimate irony. The Thai military spent four decades focusing its concern on the maintenance of power and the accumulation of wealth. Faced with a growing insurgency and the chaos of the 1973-75 democratic interlude, the security forces became increasingly radicalized by their awareness of the need for systemic reform. This psychological transformation took concrete form in the Young Turk movement and the Democratic Soldiers, both of which dramatically altered the military, particularly the army. When the army chief, Prem, became prime minister the entire kingdom was mobilized

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for counterinsurgency behind a "politics leads" strategy. In short order a correct strategy combined with other factors to destroy the CPT, because the heart of the government effort was to foster popular participation in all aspects of the kingdom's affairs.

Having done this, however, and having made the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, Thailand now faces a dilemma. The military has redefined its role as those activities which develop the country. But, clearly, there are those within its ranks who feel they — the victors in the counterinsurgency — are most qualified to decide the form and priorities of such development. The extent to which such sentiments can be controlled will decide the future of Thai democracy. The Thai military has won the war; it must now win the peace.

Tom Marks is a West Point graduate and former infantry officer. He teaches in Hawaii when not hunting down a story for SOF.

UNSUNG WARRIORS

Continued from page 35

READY

Firing on a foreign-flagged vessel is often a prelude to war, and usually it is the United States Navy that performs the task. However, on a stormy night last January, the island-class Coast Guard Cutter *Chincoteague* fired the first rounds in the escalating war on drugs.

A Panamanian freighter with a Cuban crew was attempting to navigate the Gulf of Mexico on its way to a drug rendezvous off the U.S. coast. It was a simple exercise the Cuban captain had done a hundred times before. But this time the crew of the *Chincoteague* stood in his way.

The *Chincoteague*, whose home port is Mobile, Alabama, is not a pretty vessel. Smaller than most Coast Guard ships, she is only 110 feet long, with a crew of 16. Many yachts can outrace her, and her armament consists of two 7.62mm M60 machine guns and an Oerlikon 20mm cannon. She is prone to roll in heavy seas and is not designed for long patrols. Yet, for 24 hours she chased a ship five times her size that repeatedly tried to run her down. Her actions last January closed the favorite sea lane of drug smugglers and placed the Colombian Cartel on notice that the USCG is serious.

The secret of her success is her men. Her crew is thoroughly professional. Her captain, Lieutenant Todd Gentile is a professional officer and Coast Guard Academy graduate who believes in his men and allows them to take the initiative. His crew is well seasoned and

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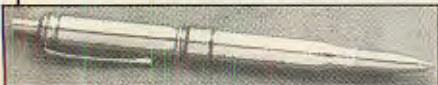
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by any naval standards, his ship is in excellent condition.

The conflict with the Cuban-run freighter started on a stormy night near the Texas coast. Seas were 3 to 7 feet and the Island Class Cutter was rolling heavily.

"We acquired her first on radar. She fit our profile of a drug-smuggling freighter. In this case, the Coast Guard goes through diplomatic channels to contact the nation under which she is flagged and requests permission to board," said Gentile. Identifying her as the *Hermann*, a well-known ship along that particular shipping lane, the cutter closed to investigate, an action the captain of the *Hermann* clearly didn't appreciate.

Aim

From the time the *Hermann* was first acquired on radar until she escaped into Mexican waters took a total of 24 hours. In addition to expending over 700 rounds of M16, M60 and 20mm fire - the *Chincoteague* also had to perform radical evasive maneuvers as the 5,000 ton *Hermann* repeatedly tried to ram her. While the freighter attempted offensive measures and her Cuban crew shouted abuse and waved machetes at the crew of the *Chincoteague*, Captain Gentile was going through channels to obtain permission to board.

This involved contact with the Coast Guard District 20 office in New Orleans, which then contacted the Washington command, which relayed the request to the U.S. State Department, which sent a request through diplomatic channels to Panama, and finally the wait for the Panamanian response. During the entire time, the freighter was closing on the boundary of safe Mexican waters. Finally, the "go ahead" was received.

Fire

Getting permission was just the first step. Now, the *Hermann* had to be stopped. Refusing to "heave to" after repeated radio calls, a warning shot was fired by Gunners Mate First Class Michael Doyle.

"A warning shot consists of a burst across the bow with the smallest weapon on board [M16]. It's to try to get the captain's attention, to inform him that he is forcibly being told to stop," Doyle said.

However, the captain of the suspect freighter returned his own fire in the form of verbal abuse over the radio, and a series of turns designed to run down the cutter.

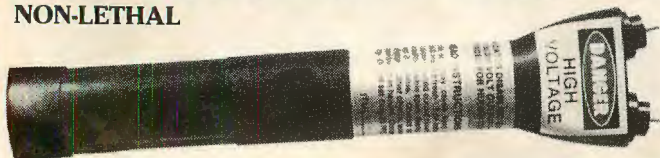
Doyle pointed out that after the rifle fire, the next step was to fire an M60 machine gun across the bow, followed by the 20mm. As the freighter turned toward the ship, M60 mount captain First Class Bosun Mate Jerry Johnson recalls, "All of a sudden he turned toward us. At the same time he was heaping abuse on the crew, ship and

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the United States," he said.

"At this stage we were only trying to inform him that we wished to board him. I stopped firing as he turned into us because our orders were not for disabling fire. We have strict regulations concerning use of force — and we adhere to them," Johnson said.

However, the freighter still didn't stop. Permission was then given for disabling fire.

"We are not trying to hurt anyone. Disabling fire is a last resort. As in the warning shots we start with the smallest, most accurate weapon and move up," Doyle said.

Again

Again first M16, then M60 fire was sent against the hull of the freighter. Following Coast Guard policy, a few shots were fired and then another warning was given. Two minutes later, the same procedure would be repeated. As the freighter turned into the cutter again, with the Cuban crew waving machetes and *Hermann's* captain, radioing threats concerning "self-defense."

Gunners Mate Doyle tells the rest of the story. "He was turning into us again and got on the radio to our Captain. This was a big island freighter and her deck was a good 20 feet above us. The M60 fire was not affecting her at all and the freighter captain was laughing at us and asking if that was the best we could do — then we fired the 20mm," Doyle said. The freighter skipper went from a laughing smuggler to a weeping Cuban captain in a few seconds as fire was directed at the rudder post and engine room.

"First he was yelling 'assassins, assassins.' Then he started telling us that he couldn't stop, that 'they' wouldn't let him," Doyle said.

The freighter, belching black smoke and taking on water, was close to Mexican waters and set a course for the boundary. Not having permission to enter Mexican waters, the *Chincoteague's* work was over. However, so was the career of *Hermann's* captain. On arriving in Mexico, the captain seemed to have forgotten to pick up any cargo when he left Cuba. His ship empty, his cargo jettisoned, the cartel out millions. While the men of the *Chincoteague* were not able to seize the cargo, their actions delivered it to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico.

The crew of the *Chincoteague* had not had to use disabling fire nor go through the complicated procedure of obtaining permission from foreign governments before, but they did have extensive drills on a daily basis for over a year just for an occasion like this.

"The Captain's a firm believer in training. The mission of the Coast

Continued on page 96



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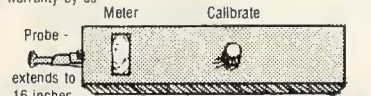
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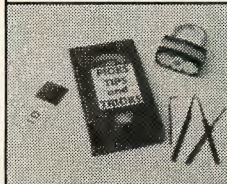
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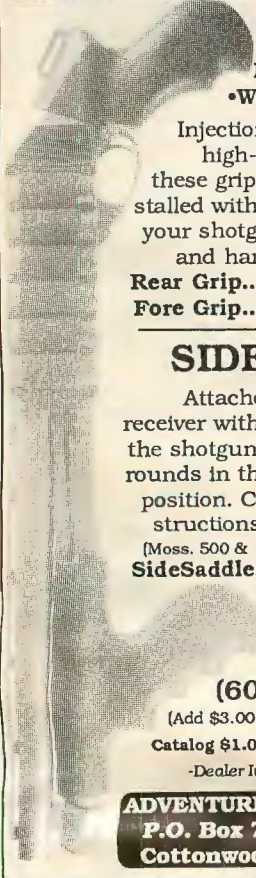
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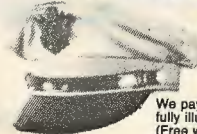
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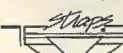
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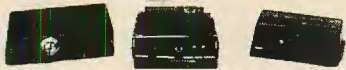
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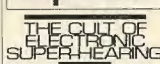
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— C. Denver Mullican ✕

IN REVIEW

Continued from page 4

gence. A variety of well-meaning programs were devised, including the fabled Phoenix Program, Revolutionary Development, and classical intelligence penetration operations of both South and North Vietnamese groups. It looked great on paper but there was no quality control. The CIA leadership regarded Vietnam as a painful sideshow, staffed it with generally ill-equipped contract employees overseen by out-cast career officers exiled from diverse ends of the world.

However, there were occasional officers like DeForest who produced excellent results through long residence in Vietnam, coming to terms with the people and displaying ingenuity in their operations. **Slow Burn** is about an intelligence service's equivalent to a foot-slogging "grunt" in the trenches, fighting a vital but unappreciated war, eventually to be betrayed by his leaders. There were many DeForests in Vietnam — intelligence officers, infantrymen, and fighter pilots. They performed admirably, heroically, and futilely, betrayed by a political and military leadership that lacked the resolve necessary to win.

Reviewer Alex Erskine spent 12 years in the U.S. Intelligence community and served as a Provincial Officer in Charge in Vietnam. ✕



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SWAT OLYMPICS — Police Special Weapons and Tactics teams are usually the best officers of any department. So who fields the best of the best in the United States? If you're a bad guy, you need to read this story so you'll know where *not* to live ...

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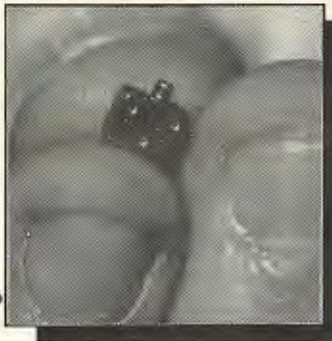
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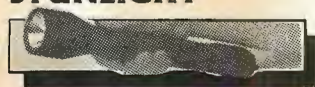
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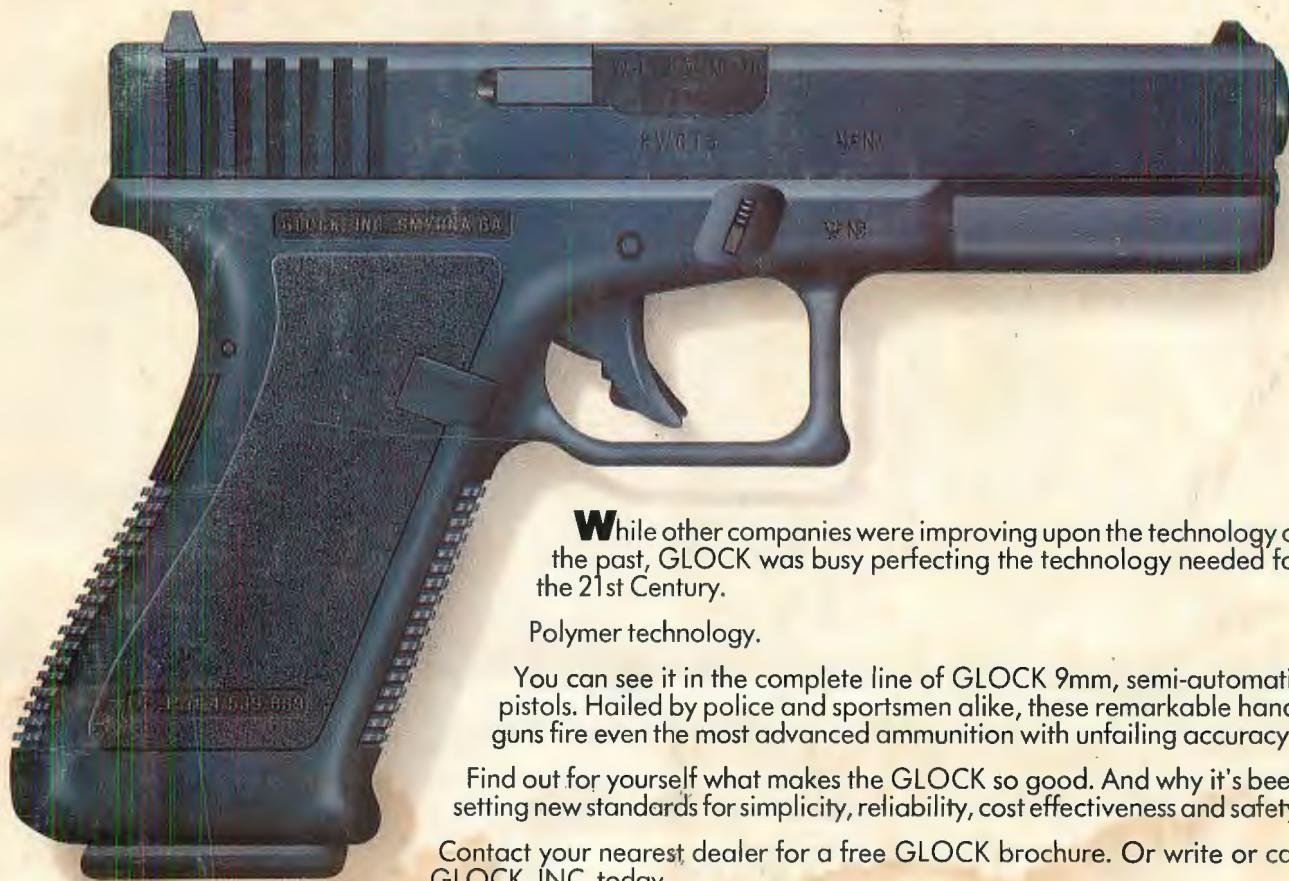
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